

Ark Volume 15

Act 1: Eternal Soul

Dukong, dukong, dukong!

The heavy sound echoed and vibrated through the air. It belonged to the black sphere hovered in front of the buildings in Oberium square. The black sphere contracted and expanded just like a heart. The dark energy surrounding the sphere seemed to become more intense. The energy the sphere emitted wasn't just simple darkness. It was deeper than darkness! It was like the darkness was infused with wickedness and flames of madness! The inside twitched and unpleasant sounds could be heard from it.

"What is that?"

Ark stared at it with puzzled eyes.

Chwaaaaak!

A windstorm suddenly emerged from the black sphere and the dark aura went in every direction. The dark aura flew around the ruins like a snake looking for food and closed around one of the dead.

"Aaaaah, help me!"

"I don't like this, ah, no!"

Screams rang out all over the place. Did the dead still have memories of the cursed magic that happened hundreds of years ago? The dead who lingered had shown no interest in anything now turned pale with fear at the dark aura. They rolled on the ground to escape but their resistance was meaningless.

"Kuaaak!"

The dead who screamed were eventually captured. The translucent grey gas emerged and scattered everywhere. It was the souls of the dead. The souls were drawn into the black sphere like they were pulled by

magnets. The black sphere opened like a huge, hungry animal and devoured the souls.

"Souls.....it's eating them?"

A groaned flowed from Ark's mouth. It was unthinkable to even consider. Overwhelming fear! The dead were in a complete state of panic at the horrifying scene. They screamed and ran all over the place, but the dead had no chance of escaping the dark aura. It was the end once they were caught. The dark aura sucked out the souls and then the souls were swallowed by the black sphere. Whenever that happened, the black sphere fluctuated and the dark aura became even stronger. The same situation hundreds of years ago was being reproduced again in Oberium!

"Damn, what on earth? What am I going to do?"

Ark couldn't grasp how to handle the sudden situation. At that time, something rose from the mouth that swallowed the soul. It was shaped like a huge human face!

"Karma!"

Ark screamed after seeing the face. To his surprise it was the face of Karma who he defeated in the crypt. Yes, Karma had formed after Hero Maban's summons became corrupted by the curse magic and shed his form. In other words, Karma was using the magic which drove Oberium to extinction! It was the reason why the atmosphere was unusual.....

"I've grasped the situation."

Ark murmured in a gloomy voice.

"Is this the boss' second transformation?"

That's right. In RPG games, the heroes would go through obstacles to defeat the final boss only to have it go through a final, stronger transformation. However, the boss monster was only level 450 and

didn't have time magic anymore yet he went through a secondary transformation?

"Like this.....I can't die....not like this!"

Ark looked at it with irritated eyes. While Karma chewed on the souls of the dead, he fixed his gaze on Ark.

-You are.....!

Chwaaaaak!

Ark drew his sword.

"This is the end, Dark Blade!"

Ark reflexively swung his sword. But the sword just pierced through the darkness and it wound around Ark.

"Eh? What, what the? The attack didn't hit?"

Ark looked somewhat perplexed. Then the dark spirit passed through Ark, just like it previously did the sword.

"What the hell?"

He used Skill Penetration a little too late.

* Karma's special skill: Soul Eater

When this magic is used, Karma will be able to seize the souls of the dead to satiate himself. When Karma absorbs the souls, he is able to absorb the chaos energy. If the chaos energy accumulates then Karma will be able to use this energy for a special skill. However, Soul Eater can only be used to seize the souls of the dead and undead.

Ark, Racard and Buksil's eye was wrapped in the dark aura but they weren't dead so they weren't affected. In Karma's current state, Ark's sword was unable to damage him. But Karma was also unable to damage Ark.

‘I got scared for no reason.’

However, it was still too easy to breathe a sigh of relief.

‘There is something unusual.’

Although he couldn’t be attacked by Karma, he was still uncomfortable by something. In particular, the chaos energy present in the information window weighed in his mind. Ark had taken away the gem that Karma had targeted for hundreds of years. Wasn’t there a reason he was trying to obtain the chaos energy from the dead souls? If the chaos energy became full then there was no guarantee what would happen.

“We should withdraw first to check out the situation.”

“Huh? But there’s still the dead people.”

“It can’t be helped. My attacks don’t connect.”

Ark looked at Buksil’s eyeball and scratched his head with irritation. Of course Ark wanted to help the dead. They had been cursed and suffered forever while being forgotten by the world. Although they were NPCs in the game, he couldn’t help feeling pity for them after hearing Anguradon’s words. But the sphere was collecting energy for a questionable attack. The dangerous smell was more important than his compassion. In addition, would the dead even obey if Ark gave an evacuation order?

‘Although my mood is a little bad, I don’t have a choice.’

However Ark couldn’t flee. Ttadak, ttadadadak!

Before he even moved a step, he heard Razak’s voice from behind him. Based on the information about Soul Absorption, Ark and Racard weren’t affected by it. But there was something he hadn’t considered. Razak was an undead who was also tied to Oberium. Yes, Razak had been wrapped in the dark aura as soon as he exited the crypt.

-Razak has been caught by Soul Absorption.

Once caught by soul absorption, the dead's life force is consumed continuously. The health which disappeared was absorbed by Karma. Once the soul is trapped in Karma's body then it can't be freed.

"God dammit!"

Ark cursed as he realized the situation too late. Originally, the undead had no concept of 'death.' The term 'undead' meant an existence that had already died. There were even undead users who could rejoice in killing but were unable to precisely express it. After getting out of combat, the undead was unable to enter that state again for a certain period of time. That meant..... If a user killed a monster then it would regenerate after a period of time. That is the reason why monsters continued breeding. However, the undead were created so they had no concept of reviving after a period of time. That's why the undead regenerated quicker than other monsters. This is because the undead's soul never leaves their body. But Soul Absorption went against that rule. The dead who had their souls caught wouldn't be able to resurrect anymore. And that also applied to Razak. If Razak's soul was shut in Karma's body then Ark wouldn't be able to summon him anymore.

'Danger, it's really dangerous!'

A red warning light flashed in Ark's head.

"There's no way! How can I leave now? Dark blade!"

However, Karma didn't have a body at the moment and was just the pure embodiment of magic. Just like before, the physical attacks didn't connect. Ark's attack could do no damage to the dark aura. Meanwhile Razak rolled on the ground as he received damage from the dark aura wrapped around him.

Ttadak, ttadadadak!

"Ugh, unbelievable.....!"

Ark's face darkened. Just like the other dead, Razak couldn't resist Soul Absorption.

'It will stop if I cancel the summoning but.....'

When the summoning was cancelled, Razak would be recalled to the underground jail in Oberium. The dark aura was spread all over so he would still be caught while stranded. Then Ark wouldn't be able to do anything.....no, he had to find a method but Razak's health had decreased at an incredible pace and was already down to 30%. And 29%, 28%, 27%.....it fell all the way to 22%.

"N-no!"

Then Ark jumped as Razak abruptly screamed and slammed his shield on the ground. Then Ark lost 300 mana and an information window appeared.

-Your summon Razak has drained your mana to use Steel Loyalty.

<His body has become like steel and defense has increased by 894>

"Isn't this the skill Anguradon used in the crypt?"

Ark looked at Razak with amazement as Razak changed into a steel sculpture. Just like when Radun learnt Stalking in the past, Ark wasn't present when he learnt it and never saw the information window. Anyway, Razak stopped having his health drained after using Steel Loyalty. Since his body changed into steel and defense increased, Soul Absorption didn't have an effect anymore.

"The crisis has been stalled for the moment."

However, he still couldn't breathe a sigh of relief. Just like Anguradon, Razak couldn't move after turning to steel. And the dark aura was still attached to Razak's body. He only had 22% health left. As soon as Steel Loyalty ran out, his health would be drained and his soul absorbed completely.

‘In the end I have no choice but to defeat that guy if I want to rescue Razak. There must be a way to kill him. No, there should be. If I can’t handle him than Razak would be eaten. But all physical attacks are invalidated..... Huh? Wait? Physical attacks were 100% invalidated? Then isn’t it the same as when I use Slime’s Time? Then perhaps if I.....?’”

When he used Slime’s Time, the attacks he wanted to avoid the most was magic. Then Ark came up with an idea.

“Okay, then shall I try this? Elemental sword, Fire attribute!”

Pepepepeng!

-Karma has received fire damage.

50 damage!

“It works!”

As soon as the fire wrapped sword was brought down, the dark aura was cut like tofu. Karma negated physical attacks by 100%. In other words, the only damage came from the magical property that was on the sword. Elemental sword gave his sword an addition effect which corresponded to 10% of his basic attack. In other words, Ark could only exert 10% of his power. Therefore his damage was at most 30~50.

‘But small damage is still damage!’

Since Karma couldn’t attack Ark, he would eventually manage to defeat Karma. However, there was a big problem.....

-Karma has recovered 100 health using Soul Absorption.

-Karma has recovered 100 health using Soul Absorption.

Karma restored 100 health every time he swallowed a soul. With all the dead spread out in Oberium, his health was recovered faster than Ark

could damage him. There were enough dead for several days so wouldn't Elemental Sword be ineffective?

'But there is no way I can wait until the dead disappears.'

Of course Karma wouldn't be able to recover his health anymore after he swallowed all the dead. But who knew what would happen once Karma swallowed the dead and the chaos energy was charged? He didn't know but Ark was absolutely sure that it wouldn't improve the situation.

'There's only one option. Yes, I have to separate the dark aura from Razak's body and run away as fast as possible.'

Of course, the dark aura was stuck to Razak's body so he would damage Razak as well. However, Razak was in a defensive state after using Steel Loyalty. He would hold survive until the dark aura was separated. So Ark changed his direction and attacked the dark aura that was stuck to Razak. Elemental Sword struck the dark aura and melted it. Although Razak received some damage, his defense had increased to 894 so he didn't even receive 10% damage. Ark gave an order to Racard after clearing the dark aura.

"Racard, distract Karma and turn his eyes in another direction!"

"Okay! This way, you idiot!"

Racard immediately attracted Karma's eyes to the other side of the street using Taunt.

"That's it, now's the time. Release steel loyalty! Run!"

Razak ran as soon as the skill was released. No, he was going to run. Ark judged that Karma had completely changed into the black sphere. If Racard drew his attention then they could stealthily escape. But that was Ark's mistake. As soon as Razak turned off Steel Loyalty, the pupils that were pursuing Racard turned and stared at the two escaping. Then the dark aura hanging around flocked towards Razak and covered him.

-Kukukuku.....you stupid guy.....you thought I would forget?

‘Huk, what the? That guy was waiting for me to cancel the skill?’

-I won't miss even one person.....I will absorb everything within Oberium.....every existence here will be destroyed.....you'll never be able to sneak out.....if I cannot have the gem then we'll fall into darkness together!

The face once again emerged from the black sphere and made a noise. But the sounds did not enter Ark's ears. Ttadak, ttadadadak! Razak was wrapped in darkness and his health fell to 10%. He was going to become Karma's snack just like the other souls.

‘.....That guy still has some rationality remaining!’

It was the mistake of a lifetime! There was no ways to prevent Razak's soul from being absorbed. He was vulnerable to magic attacks. If he was a magician then his damage would be able to exceed Karma's recovery rate. However, the damage from his magic sword couldn't exceed the recovery rate.

‘If only Lariette-nim was here.....’

Ark murmured as he bit his lip. Karma's attribute was ‘demonic.’ The Innocence Knight's ‘Holy’ attribute was its natural enemy. Just like when she assisted him against Tamura, Lariette's magic would be effective against Karma. However, Karma wasn't going to wait politely while Ark left to fetch Lariette.

‘If Razak is eaten, I might be able to fetch Lariette and liberate him before he is completely digested. But it would be an issue if that fellow swallows Razak's soul. Even if I hid, I don't know what the chaos energy will do. What is an alternative method? Huh? Wait? Tamura?’

Then an epiphany came to Ark's head.

‘That's right, didn't Tamura also use the dead as a recovery source? I managed to block his recovery.....’

This was just like when he fought Tamura after Lariette changed to an Innocence Knight. When cornered. Tamura absorbed the dark fragments

and transformed himself. Then he fed on the dead to restore his health. Monsters with the demonic attribute seemed to have the ability to recover through souls. However, it was Ark that stopped Tamura's recovery not the Innocence Knight.

'The method I used to block his recovery.....!'

It felt like a lightning bolt had struck his skull. Ark raised his head and exclaimed.

"Please recover. Remember the memory of when you were honourable soldiers of Oberium which ruled Seutandal. You have been dropped into a hopeless pit thanks to the magic.

You are the only people who can save yourselves!"

Pepepepeng!

A strange sound suddenly resonated from Karma who had swallowed the souls.

-Kuaaaah.....what....what the....this....this is?

Black blood suddenly flowed from Karma's body. Although Karma's health after he changed to a black sphere was low, Ark was absolutely certain that the damage he received wasn't low. The movement which Karma used to pick up and swallow the dead became dull. Ark's eye lit up at the sight.

'It's just like with Tamura. He can't recover health when the Nursing effect is applied to the dead. I've finally found it. It is this fellow's weakness! Now I can defeat him alone!'

That's right. This was the method he used to stop Tamura's recovery. When he used Nursing, there was an additional effect of 'Blessing.' 'Blessing' has a holy attribute. Since Karma absorbed the dead blessed with the holy effect, he received damage instead of recovery. Every time Karma absorbed a soul which had received

Nursing, he shook as he suffered a blow. Finally Karma stopped Soul Absorption and glared at Ark.

-Ohhh....you, you.....! After snatching my gem.....now you dare do such a thing.....never.....I'll never forgive you!

"You won't forgive me? What did you say?"

Until now there had been confusion on Ark's face. He had been thinking about escaping but the situation had changed. Once Soul Absorption was released, Razak was also freed. Furthermore, Karma couldn't attack Ark directly so he was now insignificant!

"Why are you behaving so impertinently? It's my turn now!"

-You intend to attack me.....

"Attack you? Why would I do something as tiring as that? Your stomach is full of weapons."

-What?

Karma flinched a little bit. Ark smiled and used Nursing again.

"Now, see what your willpower has accomplished! When your will opposes, the enormous evil won't be able to control your soul! Your soul only belongs to you. Now it is your turn! Brave residents of Oberium, wake up and fight against the darkness!"

Pepepepeng!

At the same time, there was a tremendous sound from inside Karma. Yes, Karma couldn't swallow any more souls but he already had some trapped inside him. The souls of the dead hadn't disappeared yet. It was only trapped. And Ark used Nursing on the souls of the dead that were confined. In other words, all the souls within Karma had changed into a bomb. Thanks to the blessing effect of Nursing, it will like Karma had swallowed a handful of grenades as there were the sound of explosions and holes appeared in his body. Just like a pierced balloon,

the sphere deflated as the souls of the dead exited through the hole. It wasn't possible to keep trapping the exploding souls. It was the weaponization of Nursing! At that moment, an intense light appeared around Ark's body.

-The Miracle Nursing was successful.

Your sincerity in regards to the dead had surpassed the limits of space and species. In the past, the residents of the glorious Oberium was cursed with a spell and became the miserable undead. Thanks to the physical form, their souls had become sick and despairing! The most feared sickness in the world was despair Those who would die honourable have forgotten as the despair degraded and corrupted their souls. In the end, they became the dead with no sense of commitment. Yes, the most fearful point of the curse that the Dark Lord created was the ability to take away hope and give despair. But you have given those despairing souls courage to overcome the despair.

You have not abandoned the souls that everyone else has forgotten. You have extended a helping hand to them even when there was no hope left. Having a heart which doesn't give up is a true qualification of a caretaker. Thanks to this achievement, you have become a true paragon of a caretaker and have reached a higher level.

* Due to the success of miracle nursing, all stats increase by 1.

* The Affection stat increased by 10.

*Fame increased by 50.

*Alignment to good increased by 50.

* The 'Purification' effect is applied to all the souls of the dead.

-Thanks to the success of Miracle Nursing, you've received the title of Oberium's Caretaker.

Your fame as a Caretaker has increased, so you will receive praises from

many patients.

* As a title bonus, all stats increase by 2.

*Fame increases by 50.

‘Miracle Nursing! Stat bonuses!’

It was an excellent choice to see it through to the end. When Miracle Nursing was used, all the souls were vomited out. With all the souls vomited out, Karma was worthless now. The black sphere was unable to maintain its form and crumpled.

‘Although I can’t deal any more damage with Nursing now that the souls are gone, there are also no ways to attack me. I can just relax and use Elemental Sword until it’s over.’

“Come, shall I finish this? Elemental sword, Fire attribute!”

Ark smiled cruelly and used his magic sword.

-Kukuku.....you stupid fellow!

Then hundreds of tentacles suddenly extended from Karma and wrapped around Razak and the souls. However, Ark just snorted and laughed.

“Bah, do you want to commit suicide?”

The ‘Purification’ effect of Miracle Nursing also applied to Razak. Even if Karma swallowed the soul, it would just deal damage and he would have to vomit it out again. Swallowing the soul was like committing suicide. However, Karma didn’t swallow the souls again. After Karma captured the soul, he suddenly grew to an extravagant size.

“Huk, how come? Haven’t all the souls been vomited?”

Karma had a vague smile at Ark’s confusion.

-Huhuhu...you fool.....still don't know.....these souls are all affected by my magic.....despite them exiting, I had time to absorb the souls.....but the magic fell off the souls once they were purified.....where do you think all that magic went?

"Don't tell me.....?"

-That's right.....because of you, all the magic separated from the souls was absorbed by me.....it was exactly what I wanted.....I'll show you what my grudge for hundreds of years can do!

Ark's face stiffened at the messages that appeared continuously.

-Karma's chaos energy has been 100% charged and the 'Chain Disappearance' skill used.

When 'Chain Disappearance' is used, all the undead connected with Karma will disappear together. After the soul disappears, it will cause a chain explosion that will deal x100 damage to all living things.

<Time until Chain Disappearance is used: 3 minutes>

'Chain Disappearance.....!'

Ark then recalled the words that Karma shouted in the crypt. Karma had fallen into despair after Ark took away his precious gem. And this was the ruin that Karma wanted! Karma had gathered the chaos energy in order to completely ruin Oberium. His use of Miracle Nursing had actually helped Karma instead. He needed the chaos energy to be charged before he could use the curse magic. Karma had taken advantage of the energy from Miracle Nursing to charge the chaos energy. The price of his mistake was ruin.....!

"A-Ark-nim!"

The floating eyeball shouted in a desperate voice. In fact, Buksil had been watching the battle from the opposite side of the river. But Chain Disappearance was a skill which dealt x100 damage by the number of souls to all living things within Oberium. There were hundreds of souls

within Oberium. It was a nuclear bomb which would deal thousands of damage with one blow. Ark and even Buksil who was on the outskirts would be blown apart.

"Damn, do we have to leave?"

Ark ran forward and swung his sword.

Sakak-!

Karma's body was struck and a black piece struck off. But although there was a black piece on the ground, the main body just grew back again. It was the same with his tentacles. No matter how many times the tentacles around Razak were cut down, they just grew back again.

"We're screwed. Should I have run away sooner?"

But it was already too late. Now that the skill was used, Ark and Buksil wouldn't be able to escape from Oberium within 3 minutes.

"Racard, what are you staring blankly at? Stop him!"

"But none of my attacks hit."

"Damn, who told you to stop cutting the tentacles? Continue cutting them until they can't combine anymore!"

"U-understood."

Racard picked up a stone and brought it down on the black chunks. However, the stone just passed through the blackness like Ark's sword. Karma looked at Ark and Racard and shouted.

-Hahaha, it's impossible.....now the only thing left is death.....everything will die!

In the end the stone was just thrown away. Racard who was looking around suddenly noticed something strange in a corner and flew to Ark.

"Eh? Master, look at that!"

"Can't you see I'm a bit busy? Hyaaaaa!"

"It's not that. Look over there?"

"Damn, what is it? Eh? What the, that is?"

Ark frowned as he turned around but his expression soon changed to match Racard's. Ark frantically swung his sword and sliced off chunks of blackness. But the black lumps soon re-joined with the main body once cut off. However, there were some chunks which couldn't re-join. The place where Ark was hacking at Karma was in the centre of Oberium where the dead merchant engaged in business. When the black chunks that Ark cut off fell onto the merchant's stall, the black chunks were absorbed by the japtem.

'What on earth is going on? The black lumps are pure magic so why are they absorbed by the items?'

Ark stared at it with amazement for a while before he remembered something.

'Wait.....the black lumps were originally a part of Karma. Karma had reassembled his body from the bones that Anguradon discarded in the underground crypt which had absorbed the magic for a long time. Ah, I see!'

He realized that he had forgotten a simple fact. It was Anguradon's body in the underground crypt, but the discarded bones were just japtem. Karma had used the magic collected in the japtem to create himself. Karma sucked the surrounding magic from the underground crypt in order to become strong enough to threaten Anguradon. Anyway, the answer was simple when considering Karma's background. The amount of magic that could be absorbed depended on certain conditions.

'When it falls off Karma's body, it is just lumps of magic. Then just like the magic poured into the bones in the crypt the first time, wouldn't the magic be poured into the japtem? If all the magic was concentrated in

one place then another monster similar to Karma might develop. But if I distribute the cut pieces.....ok, it is worth a try!

He had to try something instead of doing nothing.

"Racard, satellite mode. Display all the japtem present in the area!"

"Ohhh, understood!"

Racard flew upwards at Ark's command. At the same time, a small mini map appeared on the top right of Ark and marked the location of all the japtem.

"Okay, Riposte!"

Ark used Riposte in the direction all the japtem was gathered. Karma's body flew like pudding in every direction. Some of the lumps fell on the ground and re-joined the body but other magic lumps fell on the japtem and disappeared after being absorbed. The japtem which absorbed the magic turned black. After the magic was absorbed, the nature of the item was changed. Anyway, it was still japtem. No matter how much the japtem changed, there was no reason to pay attention to it.

"It has an effect. The main body is shrinking!"

-Ugh....t-this bastard.....what are you.....stop it!

"You idiot, do you think I would stop? Riposte!"

Every time the skill was used, Karma's body scattered all over the square. Every time the surrounding japtem turned black and the body became smaller. When the size became smaller, the tentacles broke one by one. The black chunk slowly decreased from 10 metres, 5 metres, 3 metres.....when it reached 10 centimetres, all the tentacles broke. Eventually even the main body was split into two and absorbed by the japtem. Karma who had changed to the size of a finger cursed.

-Yes.....you....dare.....I.....can't forgive you.....

-The Chain Disappearance skill has been completed!

When the time limit ended, Karma's body split. And.....bang! Karma exploded like a small pea. Chain Disappearance was a soul destruction skill which caused souls to self-destruct together. However, Karma's body had changed to the size of a pea and there were no souls attached so the explosion was small. In the end his final move meant nothing.

-Your level has risen.

-Your level has risen.

Ark shouted with joy at the sight of the message window. He had rescued Razak and the dead and even gained 2 levels. The experience he got from the boss wasn't that bad. He even succeeded in Miracle Nursing and raised his stats. That wasn't the end of the bonus he received from killing Karma. Even though Ark wasn't expecting a lot of loot, he still searched through the remnants of Karma. Finally he noticed a shiny black stone near where Karma exploded. As soon as he grabbed it, the stone melted down and was sucked into his palm. At the same time, both sides of his wrists started aching.

"Ouch, what the?"

Ark flinched and looked down at his wrist. The area which throbbed was where his tattoo was engraved. It was the trademark of 'Eternal Soul.' That part tingled like it was hit by a hammer and a light surrounded it. At that moment, the tattoo cracked and started expanding. Then an information window appeared in front of him.

-A seal of 'Eternal Soul' has been released and you've acquired a new profession-specific skill.

[Demonic Response]: Eternal Soul Stage 1 (Beginner, Passive)'

Demonic Response' is a necessary stage to learn if they want to reach the enlightenment needed for Eternal Soul. When fighting against a monster

with the demonic attribute, you will deal additional 5% damage and resistance to the magi attribute will increase by 10%. In addition, you will be able to detect hidden demonic energy within the bodies of monsters.

<Attacks against demonic attribute +5%, resistance to attributes +10%>

[Demonic seal]: Eternal Soul Stage 2 (Beginner, Active)

When the health of a monster with the demonic attribute falls to 3%, the soul of the monster can be released to be sealed. In addition, you will be able to seal the demonic attribute within certain items. The items sealed used Demonic Seal are either destroyed or given a random property. When the proficiency increases, the power will become stronger and the possibility of destruction will decrease.

<You can extract magic and seal it in an item. The effect is random.
Spiritual Power consumption: 50>

“Eh? Eternal soul?”

Ark looked at the information window with confusion. In fact, he had been wondering how to acquire the special qualities of Eternal Soul. Then this is the enlightenment associated with a Dark Soul? The original information window was vague about how to acquire the special enlightenment. But now he had a sense of it..... After a seal was released, he was able to understand most of the theory behind it. Eternal Soul was a skill created by Hero Maban to battle the forces of darkness. The key to releasing that skill was related to those dark forces. In other words, he had to study various demonic attribute to obtain a clue to reach the next stage.

“Now I have Demonic Response and Demonic Seal.....”

Thanks to Demonic Response, he could detect monsters with the demonic attribute. While travelling, Ark had encountered monsters with

the demonic attribute several times. Tamura who he met in the Abyss of Despair and the Ancient Evil Goat in Silvana's dungeon was also of the demonic attribute. Judging from his experience, monsters with the demonic attribute was a lot stronger compared to the other attributes. When dealing with such a monster, additional damage would definitely be helpful. And he received 2 skills just from unsealing one seal. What would happen if he sealed the demonic attribute into an item? He understood the general principles after seeing Karma being absorbed by the japtem. But the nature of an item couldn't be changed so easily. If he sealed the demonic attribute into an item then there was a possibility that it would be destroyed.

'What would the demonic attribute do to an item? There is also the possibility that it will be destroyed.....then liberating the souls of a monster is a good thing. Eternal Soul. Then the stage 1 and 2 skills I received are tremendously useful. Can I get it easily?'

Ark clicked his tongue with a regrettable expression.

-Ohhh, I.....I.....

The dead souls scattered around and stood up. Ark thoughtlessly flinched and stepped backwards. The souls of the dead which Karma spat out were different from before. Although their form was still a vague grey, it became clearer after Karma disappeared.....but above all their eyes changed. Until now, their eyes had looked absent-minded like they had been taking drugs. Now the eyes were sparkling and looked around everywhere.

-T-this is.....?

-It's like I had a nightmare.....

-Ah, yes I remember.

-Yes, we were defeated. The Dark Lord.....

-How long has it been since then?

The souls muttered as they seemed like they were waking up after many years of sleep. After Karma swallowed their souls and they were purified using Miracle Nursing, the souls had regained their past memory. Their expressions were confused as they wrestled with their memories after waking up.

-That huge lump of demonic magic.....we were one step away from falling into an eternal darkness. But we heard someone shouting and listened. Our minds was closed with despair and someone opened it.....!

The gazes of the souls fixed on Ark. Then he heard a voice from behind him.

-His Majesty the king has come. Everybody salute!

-Y-your Majesty!

The souls split to the left and right with surprise and gave deep bows. Ark was unsure of how to react. In the meantime, a procession walked between the dead people. It was the King and guards he saw in the throne room while searching for the pieces of the moon. Thanks to the Miracle Nursing, the previous vacant eyeball had cleared up.

'It's like I'm looking at ghosts when their eyes are cleared..... But is something wrong?'

Ark was filled with anxiety. The ghost king quickly approached Ark and grabbed his hand.

-You. It was you!

"Huh? What are you.....?"

-Ohhh, there is no doubt. The voice who led us out of the darkness was you!

Act 2: Find the Forbidden Ingredients

-You are Oberium's saviour!

-Praise the hero!

The soldier ghosts lined up in front of the barracks and raised their swords. Then the crowds of resident ghosts gave shouts of joy.

-Ark-nim, hooray!

-Hooray for Hero Maban's descendant!

He only discovered it later, but the skin of the dead was nothing but a container for the soul. When Karma swallowed their souls, the residents of Oberium were released from their restraints. Thanks to the purification, the skin of the dead was shed. Ark looked into the eyes of the ghosts. The eyes of the ghosts who escaped from the curse looked like a cartoon character. The sparkling eyes of the ghosts really didn't fit the situation. Anyway, all of this was thanks to Ark defeating Karma. The King remembered Ark's voice from when he used Miracle Nursing. After everything was put in order and Buksil and Baekgu came from the outskirts of town, they naturally got the hero treatment. Buksil looked at the sea of cheering ghosts and muttered.

"Hehehe, do you see? You're a hero."

"Don't you have any shame?"

"Huh? What is it?"

"Didn't you come running to receive the heroic treatment?"

"Why are you talking like that? Why shouldn't I have done that?"

Buksil was dissatisfied with Ark's cold words and complained.

"Ark-nim managed to pass safely through the crypt because I supported you with my eyeball. In addition, who was the one videotaping while I accompanied you?"

Baekgu naturally nodded along.

"Yes, you really would've been in trouble without my Master's eyeball."

Ugh, he didn't have anything to retort to that. He definitely knew that he would fail without the eyeball.

"Ugh, as expected you're the only one who understands. Baekgu."

Buksil and Baekgu tearfully hugged each other. They really like to sit down and play. While Buksil and Baekgu were angry at him, Ark had no energy to waste on such trivial things.

'I have to finish organizing things here. Now all that's left is.....'

Ark looked at the King with eyes that shone even more than the ghosts. It wasn't his intention but Ark had finished Karma and lifted Oberium's residents from the curse they suffered for hundreds of years. Wasn't that a heroic deed? So he should receive compensation according to his heroic deeds. The ghost king seemed aware of Ark's attention and approached.

-You did something really important.

"You're overpraising me."

Ark deliberately answered. Although he was their hero, there was no need to show off too much. At such a time, modest was more suitable. It was natural that his image would rise favourable with the NPCs. The ghost king then continued with the words he expected.

"No, no. It is not too much praise. You're actions are deserving of that praise."

"You don't have to go that far....."

-You still don't understand what you have done for us. You can't even imagine. You can't imagine how painful our existence was for hundreds of years. We spent that whole time in endless despair.

The King looked down from the balcony with a painful expression. He had sat on the throne for hundreds of years and looked over the ruins of Oberium. When Oberium was cursed by the Rwigenberg, the King sat

on his throne and cried tears of blood as he watched the end of his kingdom. The rage, despair and guilt boiling in his heart caused the King to be caught by the dark aura and he became that dishonourable existence. He stayed on the throne and saw the same image for hundreds of years, causing him countless pain. It was the really dreadful part of the curse magic. The King's haunted voice as he gave the explanation made even Ark solemn.

-Although the curse has been released, that pain is still fresh in my heart. No, my sense of guilt has deepened even more after remembering everything.

"Then what I did....."

Ark's insecure expression made the King laugh and shake his head.

-You don't have to make that expression. A King whose kingdom falls to ruin must naturally accept the pain. If I can't withstand the pain then my citizens won't be able to stomach it either. Now the curse has been released. The dark aura which bound us is gone. Although I want to give you some compensation for saving Oberium from the darkness, I don't have anything to give.....

Ark had sincerely felt anger at the darkness which invaded Oberium. In the end he managed to defeat the darkness but he couldn't even receive a single cent? When he heard the story about the dark curse, he had felt sincere anger. But no matter how angry he was, he couldn't return the treasure they lost. Then the King murmured something like he was thinking aloud.

-If there was treasure left then I would be able to compensate you properly.

'What the? Now you say that? Is that right?'

Ark frowned and stared at the King. It was obvious that the King couldn't afford to give even one penny. Ark had been full of expectation and suddenly deflated.

'Damn, saying such useless words....well, it's not possible. Anyway, I didn't do it with the intention of saving them.....I should just be satisfied with this good feeling.'

Ark sighed and scratched his head. Anyway, he wasn't going to receive any compensation for this situation. Although he would usually feel angry, looking at the ghosts he couldn't feel that emotion.

-Ah, that's right. There is that method!

Ark had half way given up but his eyes once again widened at the King's words.

'Oh, what the hell? This reaction? Should I expect something? There must be something even though the place is ruined!'

Ark looked at the King with eyes sparkling with expectation. But he was surprised at the King's next words.

-In fact, Oberium had the custom of burying the dead warrior's equipment with them in the crypt. The location of the crypt was a secret and unaffected by the darkness so it should be untouched. It's been hundreds of years but it might still be worth a look. The ancestors will understand the handling of grave goods if it is for this purpose, so I'll release the seal on the crypt right now.....

"W-wait a minute!"

Ark shouted like a person running from fire. The riches contained in the crypt? Hadn't Ark already robbed all of them? The crypt currently bore Ark's mark all over it. Just like Buksil had drawn on the grave stone in the swamp, Ark had also tried the same thing in the crypt. And the only person who has recently visited Oberium was Ark. If the King found such traces in the crypt then it would be tiring. If it was discovered, Ark's reputation as a hero would fall! In the worst scenario, there was the possibility that the Oberium ghosts would turn into enemies.

'Besides, the grave goods became new after being affected by Karma's time magic. If they were taken away.....no, it can't be!'

When Ark suddenly exclaimed, the King instantly tilted his head to one side.

-What's wrong?

"T-that is....."

Ark stuttered for a while.

"You've seemed to have misunderstood something."

-I misunderstood? What is it?

"It's true that I saved Oberium. But I was only acting upon Hero Maban's will and never wished for a reward. Of course, I couldn't possible decline if I was offered compensation. But I'm not a shameless person who would take away someone's burial goods. Please listen to my words."

"Yes, Ark-nim is absolutely not that type of person. Receiving the burial goods of people who have already passed away? People who would steal things like that are trash. Don't you agree Ark-nim?"

Buksil laughed and shot a sharp glance at Ark. Although his blood pressure rose, Ark awkwardly laughed and nodded.

"T-that's right. I never hoped for a reward for my assistance."

Racard, Buksil and Baekgu all made expressions like they wanted to vomit at Ark's shameless words. This place was Razak's hometown so he just sighed from the corner. But the King couldn't understand and just nodded with admiration.

-You really are Hero Maban's descendant! Yes, Hero Maban was just like you.

The King murmured with an expression like he was recalling some memories.

-Although my memories are fragmented after I died, I still have some remaining. Before my kingdom ceased to exist, I took great pride in its military. It was good enough that people of the next generation would remember our honourable fight against the darkness. After this city became ruins, no one dared to visit here where the cursed magic overflowed. Unlike my expectations, we have been forgotten by history.

“.....”

-But only one person. There was one person who remembered us. Hero Maban..... He didn't forget about us. He dedicated his life finding a method to save us. All his attempts ended in failure and he disappeared somewhere.....

Ark's face changed at the King's words. Hero Maban had sacrificed his life to save the abandoned souls!

'Money was power' was Ark's motto but he felt a deep emotion that was new after listening to the King. It was pride that he inherited Hero Maban's profession.

“I can't tell you in detail but Hero Maban was here until he died.”

The King nodded at Ark's words.

-Yes, it is something like that. It isn't necessary for you to say that, we already know that Hero Maban tried everything to save us. If the dark forces weren't opposed here then we wouldn't even go down in history. Our souls would've been corrupted from the regret and fallen into a rage. The reason our curse was released and we recovered our memories is because of Hero Maban. He will remain a real hero in our memories. Therefore we can't feel regret that we fought against the darkness.

“And this is the descendant of the respected Hero Maban.”

Buksil whispered as he looked at Ark with pitying eyes. After hearing such words, Ark also became a little embarrassed. Anyway, the King turned his head and looked at the soldiers lined up. The soldiers nodded with a look of pride. Then the King caught Ark's hand and said.

-Yes, I finally remembered. I'll give you a reward fitting for Hero Maban's descendant.

“Huh? A reward? The problem is.....”

When Ark made a confused expression, the King shook his head.

-No, it's not a material compensation. Hero Maban gave everything to save us and you didn't hesitate to help us either. One day, you will fight against the darkness. We would like to achieve the honour that we couldn't accomplish in the past.

Suddenly the King's hand that was holding onto Ark heated up. At the same time, there was a ringing sound and the information window appeared.

-Thanks to 'Pursuit of Truth,' you have acquired a new lore skill.

<Lore skill learned: Secret art, Ghost Knight Corps>

* 6,000 fame is needed to acquire this skill.

'A lore skill!'

Ark's eyes popped out the information window. Pursuit of Truth was the addition effect of the title 'Seutandal's Hero' that he received from Isabel last time. There were people who passed on secret techniques all over New World. He had forgotten about it after the title was received but he never imagined he would receive it in a place like this.

-Originally the royal family of Oberium made a contract with our ancestors to summon them. That is why the Dark Lord feared us. However, we're now ghosts so the contract doesn't work anymore as it is only between the living and the dead. Now that we are ghosts, we can help you using this method. Of course, you might lose some fame for making contracts with ghosts but please accept our sincerity.

If he learnt the skill then it would cause problems to his fame. He had to pay using his fame to learn the skill.

'But that skill consumes 6,000 fame.'

Ark currently had 11,825 fame. It was more than half of the fame he had gathered so far. He was a little hesitant but when would this opportunity come again? Furthermore, fame had no special meaning for Ark. If it was for learning new skills then there was no reason to refuse.

'I can't completely grasp the skill just from the King's explanation but it is easy to gather 6,000 fame. It is very likely that it is a strong skill.'

"I don't really care about the eyes and ears of the world so it is an honour to accept. You said you didn't accomplish any glory in the past but that isn't true. Thanks to the sacrifice of honourable warriors, everybody is now living in peace. No matter what the world thinks, I consider you a true hero. How can I decline everybody's enthusiasm?"

It was beneficial. Ark's actions were sufficient to light a fire in the ghosts' chest.

-Oh, thanks to you we've gained a new life!

-We'll commit our lives to Ark-nim!

The crowd of ghost soldiers kneeled down and shouted. When the King released their hands, the back of Ark's hand had a shiny seal carved. It was a shield with swords crossed through it in a X shape. It was the crest engraved on the chest of the ghost soldiers. The crest shone for a short time before it disappeared and the information window appeared.

-You have learnt a new lore skill.

Secret arts, Ghost Knight Corps (Special, Beginner, Active): A contract with the dead within Oberium- with this summoning contract, 30 ghost knights can be summoned. The ghost soldiers will attack random enemies for 5 seconds before disappearing. The ghost knights will deal physical damage and will be resurrected if they die. When the proficiency increases, the damage of the ghost soldiers will increase even more. However, summoning the ghost knights will consume spiritual power.

<30 Oberium ghost knights will be summoned for 5 seconds. Cool down time: 24 hours, Spiritual Power consumption: 300>

Summoning Ghost Knights! It was a skill where the ghost knights would be able to attack enemies for 5 seconds! It was a sort of wide area summoning skill.

‘Summoning the knights costs 300 Spiritual Power but my pets don’t consume Spiritual Power anymore so it doesn’t matter. It is better that it consumes Spiritual Power instead of mana.’

In addition, the attack was different from other wide area skills. For example, Flash was a wide area skill which dealt a base damage of 100 to enemies. However, it might not deal 100 damage because the skill would miss. In the end, it was better to use Dark Blade to finish an enemy. However, ‘Ghost Knight Corps’ is a skill which summoned the ghost knights. A troop of 30 knights would either attack one by one or concentrate the attacks on one target. In other words, it was different from other wide area skills because it could be used in a 1 on 1 situation or 1 against many..... No, it was even more powerful in a 1 on 1 situation.

“Thank you!”

Ark exclaimed as he grasped the King’s hand. He hadn’t received any compensation but his uncomfortable feeling had gone away. No, this skill was a reward beyond his expectations.

-We are pleased that you’re happy with our feeble help. The King nodded his head with a pleased look. So Ark finished the arrangements with the King to his satisfaction. Just as Ark was saying farewell, some ghosts approached with an awkward face.

-Your Majesty, a problem has occurred.

-A problem?

-Yes, in fact.....

The soldiers gathered in the area and pointed. It was towards the dead merchants who had changed into ghosts. However, they all had fearful

looks in their eyes. Then they gathered around Ark and the King and clamoured away.

-Your Majesty, it is those items.

-Those items?

-When we were cursed, these are items that we managed to scrape together. But after Ark-nim fought with Karma and sealed his magic in there, the items are emitting an eerie aura and can't go near it.

The merchants floated in front of Ark with a haunted expression. After sealing the demonic magic within the japtem, he had completely forgotten about it. It was probably because the ghosts could feel it that they instinctively feared the items.

'Don't tell me they want me to pay for it?'

That was what Ark worried about. Then the King snapped angrily at the merchants.

-What about it? Are you asking him to take responsibility for it?

The merchants flinched and quickly shook their head.

"Ah, no. Did we say such a thing?"

-But the fearful items are everywhere that we're scared to walk around.

-Yes, please get rid of that horrible stuff.

-Hmm, the sealed items are definitely very dangerous for us who are souls. It won't be hard to destroy but that might release the magic.....if that happens then the curse magic might be resurrected as well. But we're souls tied to Oberium.....

The King heard the circumstances and murmured in a concerned voice. Ark then spoke with sparkling eyes.

"I'll take care of it."

-You?

“Yes, I’m not influenced by the sealed magic. If you give me the items then I’ll leave it in a safe place.”

-Ohhh that’s right, you’re the one who sealed the items so it won’t be a problem for you. How about it?

-Please. I beg you to take those horrible things away.

‘Huhuhu, the japtem fell naturally into my hands.’

Ark inwardly laughed at the merchant’s answer. The sealed items were fatal towards the ghosts. But to Ark.....no, it wasn’t dangerous even for ordinary users and NPCs. Of course, it did absorb the demonic magic so who knew how it had changed? Would he be able to sell it as scrap iron anywhere? Well, if the stores wouldn’t buy it then he’ll just throw it away.

‘Anyway, I’ve learnt the summon Knight Corps skill so I should raise my intimacy with them.’

Ark took the japtem and increased his favourably impression. However, his mouth widened when he picked up an item. He never expected that such a treasure would be found among a pile of junk.

-Cursed Old Sword

Weapon type: One-handed sword

Damage: 7~10 (+ 50)

Durability: 8

Weight: 45

User Restriction: Level 250

The sword used by ancient warriors of Oberium. However, the sword has absorbed the demonic magic and changed its nature. The enchanted

magic within the sword has enough energy to destroy an opponent. At the same time, the sword's durability has weakened because of the magic. In addition, the user will be affected by the curse and will receive constant damage until it is released.

* Cannot be repaired, reinforced or enchanted.

* Due to the effects of the curse, the user will receive 50 damage every 10 seconds.

-Cursed Old Shield (Magic)

Armour type: Steel Shield

Defense: 30 (+250)

Durability: 7

Weight: 30

User Restriction: Level 150 Warrior

The shield is so old that it is difficult to expect anything from it. However, the shield has absorbed the demonic magic and changed its nature. When the unstable magic within the shield is attacked, the magic will be released and damage the attacker. At the same time, the shield's durability has weakened because of the magic. In addition, the user will be affected by the curse and will receive constant damage until it is destroyed.

* Cannot be repaired, reinforced, enchanted or cannot be unequipped.

* Due to the effects of the curse, the user will receive 50 damage every 10 seconds.

'Heok, damage +50? Then wouldn't that be 57~60 damage?'

Ark's eyes popped out like he was Buksil. Ark currently used a rare two-handed sword. Gwisal's damage was 40~50. But the damage of an ordinary one-handed sword was even higher than that. Of course, it

wasn't all good. The curse decreased the durability down to 8. In addition, repairing it was impossible. But was that all? It couldn't be unequipped and the user would receive 50 damage every 10 seconds. That was 300 health in 1 minute. In 10 minutes it was 3000! If a user only had 3000 health then they would die after 10 minutes. It was literally a cursed sword!

'But it also depends on how you use it.'

It only had 8 durability so swinging it a few times would destroy it. In other words, it would break before his health would run out. Of course, the damage received in the meantime wasn't small but it would deal tremendous damage to the enemy. Then he could change the sword freely during a fight. If he was fighting multiple enemies then he could use the sword for damage until it broke.

'No, it doesn't need to be that complicated.'

Ark could use Blade Storm to explode it. The more powerful the sword, the stronger the damage of Blade Storm would be. However, swords with a lot of damage were expensive so he couldn't normally do that. But it was different if the sword wasn't able to be sold anywhere else. In addition, the damage was suitable for a rare sword. The curse sword also had a demonic attribute. If he used such a sword with Blade Tempest then the damage would be unimaginable. The cursed sword was worth 30 swords! It was similar to Ark loading 30 missiles at the same time. And the sword would break through the defense!

'This is a great item to throw away.'

It was unlikely that he would be able to buy a curse item like this at the store. The item couldn't be repaired and it damaged the user when equipped so it would be impossible to sell to general users. But now a japtem worth a few silvers was more useful than many items.

'It's a jackpot!'

Ark was in a condition where his eyeballs rolled back. Then something popped into Ark's head after packing the cursed item away.

‘Wait? Doesn’t the nature of the items change when magic is sealed in it?’

And Ark had the skill to seal demonic magic in items. The Eternal Soul stage 2 skill ‘Demonic Sealing!’

‘Can’t I reproduce these items after I encounter a monster with the demonic attribute?’

If he could make cursed weapons out of japtem then the effectiveness of Blade Storm would increase by 200%! He could produce missiles using japtem and monsters with the demonic attribute. Well, monsters with the demonic attribute aren’t that common..... While Ark was mulling over Demonic Sealing’s new uses, he was also packing the japtem. He found every piece of japtem in Oberium and approached the King.

“I’ve collected all the cursed items.”

-Thank you. Now the curse is gone from Oberium.

“Then I’ll take this and go. Please stay healthy.”

-Healthy.....that isn’t something a ghost often hears.

“Ah, is that so?”

Ark scratched his head with an awkward expression and the King smiled.

-Anyway, thank you again. Good luck on your journey.

So Ark received the ghosts’ farewell and prepared to leave Oberium. Suddenly Razak pulled at Ark’s sleeve, causing him to stumble.

Clack clack, clack clack clack clack.....

“What the? What is it?”

“This guy says that he wants to ask the King something.”

“He wants to ask something?”

Ark looked doubtfully at Razak after Racard's interpretation. Razak hesitated before murmuring something again. Razak wanted to ask something about his past. Once again, Razak didn't remember anything except for the fact that he was a knight. Although Oberium was purified after Karma was destroyed, Razak hadn't recovered his memories like the other ghosts. So he wanted to understand why he was resurrected as an undead in the underground jail. Although Anguradon had told him not to dwell on the past, he started to feel greedy after the other ghosts in Oberium recovered their memory. After Razak said that, Ark also became curious.

"That reminds me.....perhaps you know something?"

However, the ghost King shook his head.

-I don't know. Because many people were jailed at that time.

Razak sighed at the King's answer. Then the King thought for a while and talked again.

-But there is one thing I know. Since ancient times, Oberium has always left a special marker on the body of someone who committed a violent crime. The mark isn't able to be erased even if the person dies and only bone is left. There are no such markings on your body so you're not a violent criminal. It is most likely that you are a nobleman or knight who violated a martial law and was imprisoned.

"No, it's still not sure. What if the bones are changed?"

Clack clack? Clack clack clack clack!

Racard looked at Razak with suspicious eyes and muttered. Then Razak ran towards Racard and swung his sword. The King watched the two of them and spoke apologetically.

-I'm sorry I wasn't more help.

Ark laughed and nodded.

"Please don't worry about it. No matter Razak's past, he is my summon now."

At that moment, Razak stopped running after Racard. Then he looked at Ark with wide and sparkling eyes. Then Buksil stroked Baekgu's head and imitated Ark.

"Baekgu, despite your past you are my dog now."

"Yes, Master. Baekgu is happy."

"Sheesh, it's not funny."

Racard kicked a stone and curled his lip.

"Dark blade!"

The sharp, sparkling sword split the space. The blood of the Mould Zombie splattered and it stumbled and withdrew. At the same time, a black flame like energy emerged from the sword and seemed to expand further.

"Not yet!"

Ark flew about the area and fired Dark Blade continuously. Every time it swung, the black aura gradually became larger until there was a spark. When the spark happened, the sword started ringing in his hand.

"Okay, now. Dark Strike!"

Ark threw his body and forcibly swung his sword.

Kuaaaa! Kwakwang!

The black aura concentrated on the sword exploded and smashed into the Mould Zombie. The black aura was wrapped in an intense spark! The Mould Zombie lost 30% of its health with one blow and the zombie

scattered in all directions. If the damage was higher than the monster's remaining health then it was an 'Over critical' attack.

"This is it, this is it. This exhilarating taste!"

Ark looked at the dispersed body of the Mould Zombie and laughed. The technique he used was the once he received when he switched profession, 'Dark Strike'. 'Whenever he used Dark Strike, the dark aura would charge until it dealt an unbeatable strike! Currently Dark Blade was an advanced skill so he could only charge it 4 times. 50% damage was added every time so four charges was +200%! In addition, Dark Strike had a higher chance of a critical hit than Dark Blade. When hit directly, a level 300 Mould Zombie lost 30% health. But more than anything, Ark really liked the feel of the blow in his hand.

'This addictive feeling is no joke.'

The sword would vibrate whenever the dark aura was charged! The feeling when the dark aura exploded was exhilarating! It was also exciting whenever he dealt an 'Over Critical' hit on the monster. Although Ark normally used Gwisal's sword, it was interesting fighting with Dark Strike. That wasn't all. He gained four profession-specific skills after changing to his 2nd profession. It was Dark Strike, Dark Tempest, Dark Scale and Moonlight Illusion! Because he received four profession-specific skills at once, Ark felt like it was fun to test all of them.

"Master, behind you!"

At that time, he heard Racard's voice from the other side.

Kuaaaa!

When he turned around, he saw 5 Mould Zombies running towards him. At the moment, Razak stood in front of Ark and raised his shield. Ttadadadang. Three Mould Zombies went flying when struck by the shield.

"Well done, Razak."

Clack clack, clack clack clack clack!

Razak began to laugh (?) He nodded his head. Thanks to his two summons Racard and Razak, Ark was able to unleash 100% of his battle capabilities. Racard analysed the area and dispersed the enemies properly. Meanwhile Razak stayed behind Ark and prevented any surprise attacks. This was Ark's original battle method. He hadn't understood until there was a vacant place. Ark was always with them so he had forgotten how big a role his pets played. But after he was parted with them for one month after Seutandal was raised, he realized how big of an existence they were. For the first time since he changed to Dark Walker, Ark felt true affection for his pets. That change in feelings was instantly applied to the system.

-Razak is delighted with your wholehearted praise.

<Affection +2>

'Huhuhu, the stats can increase like that as well.'

Previously he had no interest in affection but now he knew that it could raise the skill proficiency. In a way, that stat was more important than strength or stamina. Racard pouted and complained after hearing Razak being praised.

"Me? Me? Didn't I inform you quickly?"

"You also did well. As expected from the number 2!"

"Hehehe, isn't that right? Right? As expected from Master."

Racard continued rattling on. It was another good point of having two summons. If he called two at the same time then there was a burning sense of competition. That tendency had become even worse after their evolution. Therefore their combat capabilities improved even more when there were two of them.

"Bring it on, Razak's cousin. I am the number 2!"

Racard unleashed Taunt on 30 Mould Zombies while Razak jumped all over the place and swung his shield. It wasn't necessary to say that their presence made the battle a lot easier.

'I've caught around 140 so far?'

Ark calculated it in his head while fighting. The disinfectant was necessary when fighting the Mould Zombies. Before arriving at Oberium, the disinfectant lasted for one hour and his best record was 100 zombies. Now that Razak was here to help, he killed an average of 160. That was a 60% improvement! After switching professions, he received bonus stats and new skills and he had his summons to help as well. This made the battles a lot easier.

'My combat capabilities are at 100% thanks to Dark Soul and my summons. Should I return to the campsite and put things in order?'

"Racard, drive the zombies this way!"

"Okay!"

Racard flew around and taunted the zombies. After moving around, he managed to line up 30 Mould Zombies. Ark knew exactly what technique to use.

"Well done, you've gathered them properly. Jump!"

When Ark activated 'Wolf's Feet,' the muscles in his thighs grew. Ark leaned his upper body forward and shot off like a bullet. The power of 'Dark Blade' was condensed in Ark's sword which flew forward. It was the technique 'Adol' which combined Jump and Dark Blade. Ark's sword penetrated through the Mould Zombies.

Chwa chwa chwa chwa chwa chwa!

The sharp sword ripped through flesh and bone. The 30 Mould Zombies bounced away in different directions.

"Flash!"

Ark then continued with 'Flash.'

Previously he hadn't used Flash because he couldn't control where his body would go in the swamp when he moved like a flash of light. After cooking an 'Immunity to Poison' dish, the toxic swamp wasn't a problem. After repeating Adol and Flash a few times, more than half of the Mould Zombie's health disappeared.

"Okay, Racard and Razak! Now it is a slugfest. Concentrate on one location!"

"Hehehe, I've waited for this!"

Clack clack clack clack, ttadadadak!

Razak and Racard gathered around Ark. Despite steadily eating food, Razak and Racard had only reached an average level of 280. They've learnt combat skills from Ark but their level was less than the Mould Zombies. However, it was different when Ark used a battle formation that had him in the middle. When it was '1+1+1=3,' the battle could change by 5 or 10 degrees! Ark and his summons removed the Mould Zombies one by one.

Kuaaaaak! Pepepepeng!

Finally the last Mould Zombie was shattered with Dark Strike and the long battle ended. When he first started the battle, he had 60% experience and now it increased to 100%.

-Your level has risen.

"Yes, I levelled up!"

Ark cheered and checked his character information window.

Character Name	Ark	Race	Human
Alignment	Good +500		

Fame	5825 (+500)	Level	349
Profession		Dark Soul	
Title		Cat Knight, Oberium’s Caretaker, Jackson’s Hero, Great Adventurer, Magic Institute Member, Seutandal’s Hero	
Health	6555 (+225)	Mana	6495(+25)
Spiritual Power	400	Strength	725 (+38)
Agility	885 (+110)	Stamina	1,105 (+35)
Wisdom	161 (+15)	Intelligence	1,123 (+5)
Luck	15 (+60)	Flexibility	158
Art of Communication	66	Affection	89 (+10)
Resilience	436		
Special stat: Knowledge of Ancient Relics		153	
* Equipment item effects			
Guardian Armour of the Merpeople: Water Attribute Resistance +100%, Penalty based on water is nullified.			
Cat Paws (Gloves): Attack Speed +10%, Agility +15, Critical Hit +10%			
Raccoons Pith (Helmet): Agility + 10, Wisdom + 10			
*<Animal King> Set effect: Strength + 20, Agility + 20, Stamina +20, Defense +40			

Warrior's Transcripts (Shoulder Blades): Strength + 3

Wolf's Feet (Shoes): Agility + 40, Movement Speed +40%, Attack Speed +10%, 'Jump' is available

Galgashi's Fur (Mantle): Cold resistance +100%, Agility +20, When health is less than 50%, 'Magic Protection' automatically activates.

Adelaine's Necklace (Necklace): Defense + 40, Affection +10, 'Blessing of the Sea' available

Rarukan's Ring (Ring): Agility + 10, Attack Speed +10%, Critical Hit +8%, 'Dark Protection' available

Ark's Ring (Ring): Strength + 5, Agility + 5, Stamina + 5, Wisdom + 5, Intelligence + 5, 'Sudden Increase in Power' available

Amulet of Vitality (Bracelet): Health + 50, Health recovers by 5 every 20 seconds

Gladiator's Honour (Bracelet): Strength, Agility, Stamina +10, Fame +500, Sword-based Skill Growth +5%

* All abilities will increase by 50% in the dark

* You have the ability to hide in the darkness (30 minutes duration. Cancelled when you get into combat)

* Resistance to Fear, Darkness, Blind, and Seduction spells is increased by 50%.

* You can bring out the true abilities from all types of tools.

* Shock absorption is increased by 20%.

* Poison resistance has increased by 50%.

* Skill points: 70

'Hmmm, it is as wonderful as I expected.'

Ark laughed as he looked at the information window. After changing to Dark Soul, his various stats had ascended. But after a short time, Ark sighed and shook his head.

‘The problem is levelling up. It took a full day to gain half a level?’

Ark smacked his lips and looked at the information window with regret. After fighting Karma and leaving Oberium, Ark had risen from level 346 to 349. It was 3 levels. But it had already been one week since he had left Oberium. Even though Razak increased efficiency by 60%, he was constrained by the duration of the disinfectant and his levelling speed fell by half of its previous rate. The reason was due to his level.

In New World, users received 10% bonus experience per 5 levels when fighting monsters higher levelled than them. Of course, the opposite also applied and there was a penalty of 10% every 5 levels when the user is higher than the monsters. When there was a difference of 50 levels, they would receive no experience or items. It was a system to prevent high levelled users from staying in lower levelled areas. Currently Ark was level 349. It varied slightly but the Mould Zombies had an average level of 300. Ark would only get 10% experience at most from now on.

‘Now it is only 10%. If my level increases again then I would get experience or items.’

When considering the situation, he couldn’t allow himself to level up. It was the first time he was worried about being too high levelled.

“I have to find the necessary ingredients before that happens.....”

Ark muttered as he pulled out his dismantling knife. Yes, the reason Ark was using the disinfectant and fighting the Mould Zombies for one week was to obtain the ‘Skin of the Dead’ and ‘Heart of the Dead.’ It was better to obtain the ingredients in a place overflowing with zombies. Of course, there were a few areas on the continent where the undead was present. However, the level of the zombies Ark saw was even lower than the Mould Zombies. He wouldn’t experience a penalty to his experience and not collect any ingredients or items. He had heard rumours of

places where the undead was stronger than the Mould Zombies but the distance was too far and they were too high levelled. Facing just one or two would be too much for him.

‘No matter how strong the undead, they can only give one ingredient of each type. With higher levelled monsters, my extractions skills are only intermediate so it would likely fail and take several months to finish collecting them.

So Ark decided to hunt the Mould Zombies. However, it had been one week since he had changed professions and he only gained 3 levels so he was feeling a bit frustrated.

‘But there is no other way. I have to collect all the ingredients before I reach level 350.....’

Ark sighed and moved the dismantling knife. But after dismantling 160 zombies, he only gained 30 ingredients. Thanks to his level difference, the probability of items dropping had decreased.

‘Phew, I still need to collect 300 more.....so I have to fight like this 10 more times? Furthermore, I can’t stop my level from increasing.’

Ark confirmed the items in his bag and sighed. Then Razak and Racard who had been waiting in the campsite muttered.

“Master, when are we eating? I’m hungry enough to die.

Clack clack clack, clack clack clack clack.

“Hungry? Ah, that reminds me....”

Ark checked the gauge floating on the top right and nodded. Thanks to the duration of the disinfectant, he was unable to take a break after the battle started. After using it twice and fighting for 2 hours, his satiety had fallen to 40%. Ark received a penalty when it dropped below 50%, but he was fighting a weak enemy so he felt he didn’t need to worry about it.

‘Why isn’t that guy coming?’

“Ya, Buksil!”

Ark shouted at the eyeball floating above the campsite. Then the eyeball fell to the floor and rose again before replying.

“Ouch, yes? Huh? You called me?”

“What, were you sleeping when I was fighting?”

“Ah, no. I’m working really hard to gather the ingredients.”

When Ark looked doubtful, the eyeball shouted angrily. The place Ark was hunting the zombies was on the outskirts of the swamp. There was a reason he intentionally fought the Mould Zombie there. There was a time limit for hunting so he had no reason to go deep into the swamp. And another reason was procuring food. Of course, it was possible to find ingredients in the swamp. However, the swamp ingredients weren’t that good or numerous. Including his summons, there were 5 people in Ark’s group. It was difficult to feed five people just relying on the ingredients in the swamp. Now that Ark had Baekgu to easily find the ingredients, he left the supply of ingredients to Buksil. So Buksil would gather the ingredients while Ark was fighting. While Ark set up a campsite and hunted, Buksil looked for ingredients within the range of the safe area. In fact, previously he never imagined that Buksil would be able to gather ingredients in a place where 300 monsters were rampant. But now Baekgu who was a Wolrang warrior could play the role of a bodyguard.

‘Well, the efficiency hasn’t increased that much.’

Ark glared at the eyeball. Buksil seemed to always head to a place out of Ark’s line of sight.

“I’m telling the truth! I’ve been working hard gathering food. Think about it Ark-nim. There are three image windows floating in front of me. One eyeball is filming Ark-nim while the other one is filming me gathering ingredients. So can’t Ark-nim look at the video to confirm it?”

The eyeball clamoured tearfully. Well, he had no objections now that Buksil mentioned that.

‘However, I have to buy the ingredients that Buksil gathers so if he works too eagerly then I’ll be in trouble. It’s better for him to only gather the necessary amount.’

“I understand. Where on earth are you now? I’ve run out of supplies.”

“Eh? Already? I just dropped off 30 ingredients to you.”

“Everyone has already eaten it. Every time we finish a battle then we end up using 160 ingredients. So far I’ve been supplementing the missing ingredients with my own. But now my remaining ingredients have already fallen.”

“Hmmm, what do I do?”

The eyeball muttered as it moved left and right.

“I didn’t know that Ark-nim was lacking ingredients so I went to a place far away this time. It’ll probably take an hour if I return it right now.”

“Really? Did you obtain anything after going so far?

“I did! And you’ll understand why. There are a lot of ingredients around here.”

“Ahhhhh, I’m hungry! Hungry! I can’t wait 1 hour! I’m hungry!”

“Shut up, are you a child?”

“Ya, I am a child. Does Master think that I’m an adult?”

The bat fell to the ground and transformed into a boy vampire before speaking. Well, he didn’t have anything to say to that.

“I understand. Just sit tight and wait. Buksil, I’ll settle it this time so hurry up and return.”

Ark grunted and started exploring the area. Ark had to feed his pets using his share of ingredients.

‘Sheesh, I’ve graduated from ingredient foraging thanks to Buksil....’

But as expected, it wasn’t easy to gather ingredients in the swampland inhabited by the undead. The ingredients that appeared regularly were blighted fruit or suspicious mushrooms. Of course there were also plants that grew which counteracted poison. He could use the ‘Knowledge of Poisons’ he got from Food Worshipper to remove the toxins, but it would take too long and it wouldn’t increase his satiety that much. It also had a completely horrible taste. It was the reason Buksil had to go to a distant place to gather ingredients. Apart from that, it was surprisingly difficult to satisfy his pets’ taste.

‘It can’t be helped. I can’t wait for Buksil while I’m so hungry.’

So Ark was forced to pick the trivial ingredients. He was picking the blighted fruit when his eyes saw something. An overweight mushroom could be seen.

‘What the, that mushroom? There were mushrooms like that in the swamp?’

Although he hadn’t checked the information yet, the appearance looked quite good. It looked like a Matsutake mushroom the size of a fist that noblemen enjoyed.

‘Oho. This really might be a Matsutake mushroom.’

Ark ran to the swampland and gathered the mushroom. Then he checked the information window using Ingredient Identification with a strange expression.

-Monkfish Mushroom

A valuable mushroom that only grows in a special area.

* Advanced Additional Information: The Monkfish Mushroom has

unique ingredients which makes it difficult to digest. It's to the extent that more calories than what is present in the mushroom is required to digest the food. So a person will become hungrier the more they eat. In ancient times, the nobility deliberate ate the Monkfish mushroom in order to eat more food.

"Eating this will make you hungrier?"

It was a truly ridiculous ingredient.

'Isn't celery considered the best diet food because eating it requires more calories than it gives?'

Ark truly had an abundant common sense. But there was no reason to diet in New World. It was pointless to decrease the satiety. He might've understood if it tasted good but it didn't.

"Despite its appearance, it isn't a plausible mushroom."

Ark was about to throw away the mushroom with a regretful expression when he suddenly flinched.

'Wait? The more you eat the hungrier you become?'

There was an intense spark in Ark's brain cells.

'This might actually be a huge ingredient.'

Ark instantly took out a pot and threw the Monkfish mushroom in. He put in drinking water and suitable spices and completed a dish.

-The Survival Cooking dish 'Monkfish Mushroom Soup' has been completed!

The Monkfish mushroom has been used to make a soup. However, the Monkfish mushroom cannot be satisfactorily completed with your current cooking level. Furthermore, the special effect of the Monkfish mushroom is to cause more hunger. Eating the soup might make you

starve.....

<Satiety -40%>

“As expected. It is an extravagant ingredient!”

Ark exclaimed as he confirmed the effect of the dish. It was a strange mushroom which increased hunger. It was like a poison for a starving person. However, it would show an extravagant effect if he used it properly. It didn't matter when hunting the low level Mould Zombies but it would be extremely important for survival in the late level areas. He was able to increase his stats by eating several key foods. However, Survival Cooking had one weakness. When satiety reached 100%, it wasn't possible for him to eat anymore. Survival Cooking dishes had some of the best effects but it also increased satiety by a lot. He could only eat 5~6 dishes before eating the limit. But what if he could decrease satiety? If it was like that then he might be able to reach the limit of 10 dishes. Of course, satiety would increase more depending on the effect. For example, the 'Great Buffalo Steak' increased his strength +25 but it also increased satiety by 80%. It was good if he was starving but bad if he wanted to raise stats.

“But it is possible to freely eat 10 dishes if I can decrease satiety.”

He could eat 10 Great Buffalo Steaks! The added stat would exceed 100. Ark considered the mushroom even more valuable than japtem.

‘I shouldn't worry about hunting the zombies anymore. This is an opportunity. Earlier the status window said that Monkfish mushrooms only grew in special areas. In other words, the Monkfish mushrooms grew somewhere in this environment. If he was lucky then he might find a mushroom garden. Where is it?’

So far, it had been a fortnight since he had entered the swamp and Oberium. However, he had never seen the Monkfish mushrooms in the meantime. So Ark carefully looked around the swamp for the Monkfish mushrooms.

“The swamp on this side is cloudy.”

The swamp flowed downstream and upstream. The fact that the Monkfish mushroom flowed downstream meant that there were some upstream. Ark hurriedly gathered the ingredients and returned to the camp. He created simple dishes to fill the stomach of his pets.

“Okay, follow me!”

“Eh? I haven’t even digested my food yet so where do you want to go?”

Racard extended his thick stomach and frowned.

“Noisy! Buksil, you follow too.”

“Where on earth are you going?”

Ark replied with a wicked grin.

“To look for the forbidden ingredients.”

It was a food ingredient which caused hunger. It was an affair involving ingredients. In other words, it was the finest special ingredient which made it possible to show his full power.

Act 3: Hell Training

-Suspicious Cave

A dark and suspicious cave in the swamps. The moss and mildew coats its outside, causing a bad smell and eerie noises also can be heard from the cave.

Countless voices of the dead can be heard in the swamp. There is the root of the corruption and evil souls. If possible, it is recommended that you pretend not to see the cave and pass on by.

<Explorer's Knowledge: Hidden area discovery bonus (Skill Points: 10)>

"There is a dungeon here."

Ark gazed at the cave opening with a bemused look. Underneath the rotten wood and moss, there was a dark opening. The cave had surprisingly appeared when he followed the flow of the swamp.

'Anyway, it is certain that the Monkfish mushrooms came from here.'

A viscous liquid flowed from the cave. The Monkfish mushrooms probably grew in the cave because of the viscous liquid. In other words, the Monkfish mushrooms were growing in large quantities somewhere in the cave.

"It's been a while since I've entered a dungeon."

Ark looked at the cave and laughed. Then the eyeball sat inside Ark's collar and muttered.

"Ark-nim, isn't the atmosphere unusual?"

"You idiot, that makes it better."

There was no user who would pay attention to the various warnings present in the information window. A dungeon was the staple of RPG games. Monsters hunted in dungeons gave better experience and items. In addition, the higher reward meant higher compensation. Who would avoid that just because of a creepy atmosphere? Of course, Ark wasn't going to carelessly run in.

'Now what kind of monsters will I see in this dungeon?' Ark used Eyes of the Cat at the entrance to look inside the cave.

His pupils turned green and he could see the inside of the cave. Just like the entrance, the interior was filled with rotted wood and moss. And he could occasionally see rotten dead bodies.

"Mould Zombies, level 400 Mould Zombies!"

Ark shouted with joy after confirming the monsters that lived in the dungeon. He had just been having trouble with the level of the Mould Zombies within the swamp. But now he found zombies that were 100 levels higher! All of a sudden he had encountered monsters 100 levels higher so he didn't have a problem anymore. After calculating the dark attribute bonus, Ark was level 523. So he was in fact 123 levels higher. But his actual level was 349 and he was fighting a level 400 monster, so he would receive 100% experience and a bonus 10% for every 5 levels that the monster was higher than him.

'Even if I level up, I won't have to worry about items and materials not dropping.

Ark was fortunate about that.

'There are 20 Mould Zombies at the entrance. They won't be a problem even if they're level 400.'

Ark had a lot of experience fighting Mould Zombies and he was already tired of it. So there was no need to think of a plan using 'Stealth.' The zombies were empty headed so it was impossible for them to lay traps and they would just run forward haphazardly.

"I don't need to see anything else. There aren't that many so I'll finish it quickly!"

"Hehehe, come on Mould Zombies."

Clack clack, clack clack clack clack!

Ark, Razak and Racard held their weapons and entered the cave. But a message window he never imagined appeared as soon as he entered.

-You have entered an area with a special property!

<In New World, there are occasionally areas with unique properties. This is influenced by the environment such as a snowfield. Once inside this cave, mana is steadily drained. Within the sphere of influence, 50 mana is lost every second>

‘What, what the? My mana is drained?’

Ark’s mouth dropped at the information window. 50 mana every second! Then he would lose 3000 mana in 1 minute? Currently Ark had 6,495 mana. Even if he did nothing, his mana would be depleted in 2 minutes.

‘Damn, what will I do without my mana?’

Special effects when entering a cave wasn’t uncommon. However, this effect was considered one of the worst. If his mana was drained so quickly then didn’t it mean he wouldn’t be able to use skills?

“Master, what do we do?”

Racard hesitated while flying towards the zombies and asked.

“Don’t worry about it. I just won’t use skills.”

Certainly not being able to use mana was a considerable penalty. However Ark didn’t take it too seriously. If he was a magician then being unable to use mana was definitely deadly. However, Dark Soul was closer to a warrior than a magician. He also had his passive skills which didn’t require mana so he wasn’t too worried.

“Bah, if it’s going to be drained anyway then I might as well use it all. Flash!”

Ark ran at full speed and used Flash. His sword sliced through the 20 Mould Zombies and decreased their health. Next Razak and Racard also attacked, decreasing the health until two or three zombies collapsed.

“Okay, let’s do it like that. Flash!”

Ark steadily used Flash with excitement until the fourth time he tried to use it.

-You are unable to use the skill because you don’t have enough mana.

"Sheesh, my mana is already depleted? It can't be helped." Flash consumed 500 mana with every use and he also lost 50 mana every second, so his 6,000 mana had already reached the bottom.

Although his mana had run out completely, he wasn't willing to stop. So far, he had killed thousands of zombies in the swamp. Even without his skills, there was no reason to worry about 20 zombies. No, if he could hit it then he would easily defeat them. But Ark miscalculated. Kuaaah! Because he randomly fired Flash, Ark had stopped right in the middle of a horde of zombies. Ark had defeated two or three zombies but there were 20 of them. In other words, he had to block approximately 40 attacks. No matter how quickly Ark swung his sword, he couldn't block that many arms. Tutututung, he felt a serious pain in his shoulder and lost some health.

"Damn, it is hard to avoid these guys in the cave. Racard, attract as many of them as possible!"

"I understand. Hey, you messy corpses. Your opponent is me!"

Racard yelled and quickly flew the opposite way. However, only one Mould Zombie chased after Racard.

'Whoops!'

Ark started to realize the situation was more serious than he thought. Yes, until now Racard had been able to lure 10~20 zombies thanks to the Taunt skill. Although Taunt only consumed 30 mana, it was still a skill. When his pet used an active skill, it drained Ark's mana. Thanks to Ark lacking mana, Racard's Taunt skill was also disabled.

'Oh my god, then I need to deal with those guys one by one?'

All the strategies he thought of were blocked so he instantly became gloomy. This was a narrow cave so he had no room to avoid the attacks of 20 Mould Zombies. It was fortunate that Razak's Shield Stroke was a passive skill but he still wouldn't be able to handle 20 zombies. If he blocked the front then he would be attacked from behind, if he blocked the right then he would be attacked from the left. Since he was under

consecutive attacks, it was different to catch the timing to counterattack. It was one of the difficult parts when fighting 1 against 20. The laws of physics still applied to New World. That also applied to this battle. When Ark was hit by the opponent's attack, his body turned rigid for a bit. It only lasted for 1 second but Ark was unable to swing his sword during that time. In addition, his posture was also unsteady so he was unable to draw out 100% of his power. So he was unable to counterattack properly while surrounded. Unlike reality, New World had a variety of skills for this situation. Magicians had the 'Warp' skill while thieves had 'Crossing' skill. Ark's main evasion skill was Dark Dance. But he didn't have any mana.....

Pepeng, pepeng, pepeng, pepeng!

A red light flashed in front of Ark. It was the first time he was being hit so one-sidedly.

"D-Dark Dance! Flash!"

In a situation where Ark couldn't hit back, his health quickly decreased. He even forgot the fact that his skills were sealed. He became even more irritated at the severe beating he received from the Mould Zombies. After being hit, a yellow message window floated in front of him.

-You have received a serious blow and have become 'Dizzy.'

<Your range of vision has been reduced by 80% for 30 seconds. The probability of receiving a critical hit has greatly increased>

He became 'Dizzy' after being hit a certain number of times in a row! It was the first time he had been in that state since he started. When things were going well, one thing became twisted then it stayed twisted. After becoming 'Dizzy,' Ark's vision blurred in front of him. With his blurred eyesight, he was unable to distinguish between the Mould Zombies' attacks. Ark couldn't even grasp the directions and just wandered around while receiving critical hits.

"M-Master, to the right!"

Ttadak, ttadadadak!

Racard and Razak ran towards him as Ark's health nosedived. But that was just their feeling. His summons were only able to fight against high level monsters because of Ark. Now Ark was being beaten and his summons were no match against the level 400 Mould Zombies.

"Hik, it can't be!"

Racard screamed as he was hit by a Mould Zombie. Razak was also surrounded by the zombies while he used his shield to block all attacks.

"Ah, no. I can't handle this situation! I have to somehow escape!"

"Riposte, Riposte, Riposte!"

Ark was almost in a critical condition so he swung his sword wildly. Although Riposte was a chain skill, he could still manually counterattack. Even when he concentrated, the skills sometimes failed. While in his 'Dizzy' state, it was impossible to succeed in his skills.

'Something....there must be another way.....'

Ark's lips became dry as his health continued decreasing. Then something popped into Ark's head.

"That's right, I have that. Ghost Knight Corps!"

Yes, the desperate plan he came up with was summoning the ghost knights of Oberium! It was an active skill but it consumed Spiritual Power instead of mana. The space abruptly started shaking after Ark used the skill. He looked at the gaping space and saw heavily armed ghosts from Oberium.

-The Oberium Knights have come when you called!

The knights looked around and shouted as they saw the Mould Zombies.

-Over there, defeat the threatening enemies!

-For the glory of Oberium!

Ohhhhhh!

The 30 ghost soldiers rushed like a storm at the Mould Zombies. Just like a huge wave had swept over a sand castle on the beach, the ghosts wielding shields, swords and maces poured over the zombies. Unfortunately, it was still a beginner skill despite the visual effects so the zombies weren't hurt that much. The ghost soldiers were also impervious to any attacks. The Mould Zombies were pushed by the pressure of the ghost soldiers and collapsed like dominos. The ghost soldiers gained even more momentum as they rushed the Mould Zombies. However.....

-Wahhhhhh, those evil zombies! Eh?

Bbyorong, bbyorong.

The chief knight shouted with anger after hearing an alarm ring.

-Drat, our bodies are tied to Oberium so we can't help anymore.

Then the bodies of the ghost soldiers disappeared like they were a lie. The 5 second duration time of Ghost Knight Corps had ended. Although it had consumed 300 of his Spiritual Power, Ark managed to escape the siege of the Mould Zombies thanks to the ghost soldiers. It was his last chance to escape from the cave!

'Let's escape the cave for the moment!'

Ark did his best to turn around and threw his body. However, he felt a devastating impact to his face and saw stars.

"Ouch, my head!"

Ark was still 'Dizzy' so his pupils were unclear. He couldn't see where he was going and ran into a wall. It was one of his most embarrassing moments ever, escaping the Mould Zombies only to run into a wall.

"Racard, what are you doing? Didn't I tell you to take care of the directions?"

"Sheesh, why are you so nervous? You didn't give me any time to talk."

"Shut up, quickly inform me of the directions!"

"Okay, follow me!"

Racard complained after pulling Ark's hair. It was like Ark was blind so he had to follow Racard's directions. Racard pulled Ark's hair and dragged him while Razak blocked the zombies with his shield and followed.

"Are we there yet?"

"Not yet."

Ark panted while he listened to Racard's answer.

'I've walked approximately 100 metres but when did I enter that deeply?'

Ark thought it was slightly strange but he had no way to check. After a while, his eyesight gradually brightened. Ark's face hardened at the same time. When he surveyed the area, he had already left the cave. The cave was near Saint Betelgeuse and the Mould Zombies had retreated back to the cave after he exited. Yet Racard was still pulling his hair and was turning round and round on the same spot.

".....Are we there yet?"

"There is still a long way to go. Heok, it's dangerous. Quickly!"

When Ark asked in a low voice, Racard just pulled his hair harder.

"The only dangerous thing is your head!"

Ark grabbed Racard and shouted. Then Racard panicked and stuttered.

"Eh? M-Master can see now?"

"Do you want to die?"

"Please don't look at it like that. I was just kidding."

"A joke? Then you want to play?"

Ark replied with a wicked grin. He wanted to relieve a little stress.

"See, I told you there was something unusual."

The eyeball murmured as he studied Ark's face. Then Ark stealthily turned his head and pointed to one side.

"Your idea of a joke is hitting me?"

"..... You've returned safely."

The eyeball carefully looked at it and answered. Ark indicated to the corner where Racard was sitting with swollen eyes. Since the situation had deteriorated so suddenly, his pets had considered mutiny. Anyway, Ark managed to relieve his stress with Racard but he was still miserable.

'Even if my skills can't be used.....'

Who would've thought that he would be so one-sidedly beaten up? His confidence which had swelled after changing professions and hunting 160 zombies in a hour suddenly burst. However, being mauled by zombies wasn't the only reason for Ark's miserable mood.

'I didn't think it was possible. I've become dull.'

During the battle, Ark realized he had some serious problems. In fact, this wasn't the first time Ark had fought many enemies in a narrow space. In the past, he also experienced the same thing when sweeping up the thieves. In addition, the enemies had similar levels after applying the dark attribute bonus unlike now. But it hadn't been one-sided that time.

'The reason is clear. I've been unconsciously relying on my skills too much.'

Yes, Ark immediately realized the problem. In the beginning, Ark had placed more emphasis on his combat ability than his skills and stats. Just like a fighter observed the enemy's combat pattern during a tournament, he had meticulously looked for methods to defeat them. He didn't have any worthy skills so he hadn't used his skills carelessly. However, Ark currently had various attack, defense, evasion and wide area skills. Thanks to his steady effort, he managed to gain over 6,000 mana. His health was also on par with his mana so could fire skills blindly. Ark's fighting technique had evolved from a battle of perception to one which used skills blindly. It was because hunting was more fun and quicker when he used skills. He couldn't even remember the last time he had used kicks.

'This is the reason that I've been beaten up!'

Ark had certainly become strong after changing to his 2nd profession and learning various skills. However, because of that his pure combat abilities had regressed. Once his skills were disabled, he was unable to fight properly.

"Oh my god..... I'm no different from the trivial warriors I've beaten.'

In the old days, Ark had thought Andel was pathetic for only relying on his defense and skills. Unlike online games in the 2000's, a character in a virtual reality game was more than their level or skills. Understanding a battle was as important in battles as utilizing skills. He was able to display his might in a 1-on-1 match with Shambala and JusticeMan because of that. Ark knew better than anyone about overlooking something important. It was a failure for which he had no excuse.

'I thought I was training properly but I wasn't.'

The first reason was that Ark had been fighting weaker enemies after receiving the 50% dark attribute bonus. The second reason was that he relied on skills rather than ability in emergency situations. Overconfidence was also the reason why he blindly entered the cave. In the beginning he wouldn't have behaved so ignorantly.

'If I fight against Shambala then isn't there a 100% chance that he would beat me?'

Although it was a dismal thought, Ark tried to maintain a positive mindset.

'Yes, I don't need to think so badly. It is lucky. I've realized my mistake before it is too late to go back. Even though skill application is important, maintaining my combat ability is also essential. I've clearly realized it this time. Okay!'

"Now, we've rested enough so let's get started!"

"What? We're entering again?"

Ark stood up and Racard frowned at his words.

"Of course. Have I ever abandoned a dungeon just because of tough enemies?"

"No but....."

"Don't worry. I have no intention of entering so ignorantly this time."

After recovering his mana, Ark's group once again returned to the cave. Ark sent a command to Racard.

"Racard, pull a few of them to the entrance."

"Aha, you intend to take care of them little by little?"

"Such a thing.....why does your expression seem a little bothered?"

"I'm going."

Racard quickly flew into the cave after Ark glared at him. He unleashed his bitterness from Ark's abuse on the Mould Zombies and lured three of them. Monsters gathered in one place were usually had a 'link' between them. 'Link' was an established system where certain monsters

moved together. However, the Mould Zombies were undead and weren't caught by 'Link.' It was something Ark was glad about.

Kuaaaa!

"Master, they're coming!"

Racard flew out of the cave entrance with three zombies following him.

"Okay, I'll start now. For the moment, I won't use my pets or skills!"

"Racard, Razak, you don't have to move. Don't help me even if it becomes dangerous!"

"Eh? But why? Well, it's not that hard."

Clack clack clack, clack clack clack clack!

Ark received the promise from his pets and ran up to the Mould Zombies. When Ark ran in front of them, the Mould Zombies changed their target. Wind blew as the sharp nails sliced down! Ark crossed his legs and used a taekwondo move to block the sharp nails. Then the other two zombies swung their arms as well. Although one of them was blocked by his sword, the other nail grazed his shoulder.

'Ugh, my reaction time has become slow as well. In the old days I would've had no trouble avoiding that attack. I only used 'Dark Dance' for a while and have become sluggish. I have to concentrate or I'll be hit again.'

At the same time that Ark suffered damage, he turned his body and avoided the next attack. In this situation, it would be easier to connect 'Parry' and 'Counter-attack' for the chain skill Riposte. Then he would follow it by continuous Dark Blades until the dark aura built up and he used Dark Strike.....A picture was painted in Ark's head at the moment. He had become accustomed to battling using skills.

'But if I do that then it won't be training!'

Ark flinched and repressed the desire to use his skills. If he excluded all his skills and only used 'Sword-Hand Combat' then it would be training.

'Riposte is a skill so I can't use it no matter how much I want to!'

Ark leaned his upper body forward to avoid the nails. Then he stretched his leg and kicked the Mould Zombie. The Mould Zombie lost its centre of gravity and stumbled. Then Ark threw his body upward and kicked the Mould Zombie's jaw.

Kuaaaaak!

The Mould Zombie rolled over several metres just like a movie.

"How about that? This is Korea's taekwondo!"

Ark muttered with pride. Of course, most people were heavy so they wouldn't fly several metres from a kick. But even if the laws of physics exist, this was still a game. His attacks depended on his stats and he had 725 strength. The stats also applied to the Mould Zombies but it was like they were kicked by a bull. Such calculations were essential for combat in New World. Although Ark didn't go to the gym anymore, he never missed his dawn exercise. If it was simply taekwondo skills then he was confident. But that was in reality. In New World, his battle style was adapted to fit the game i.e. New World taekwondo style!

"I have to concentrate and maintain my posture."

Ark put more focus on his training than on defeating the Mould Zombies. He avoided the zombie's attack and did a spin kick. The spin kick was followed by his sword attacking the stomach! When he was surrounded, he stepped back and started kicking. A variety of taekwondo techniques emerged. At first he was a little worried, but eventually his body warmed up and he could deal with the three Mould Zombies. Even though he didn't use other skills, he did use the basic Sword-Hand combat because it was effective. The Mould Zombies were medium-sized monsters so there was a 5% chance that advanced Sword-Hand Combat would cause an abnormal state! If he continuously used kicks then there was a high chance of causing that state.

"Take this!"

Kukuong, kuaaah!

The last Mould Zombie was caught was a wrestling back drop and the battle ended. Ark hadn't used any skills to handle three Mould Zombies and Buksil muttered after watching spellbound.

"A-awesome. That's fantastic. You're not just a dirty person!"

"What? Dirty person?"

"Ah, no, rough.....no, hot.....yes, you have the hottest personality."

"That's not true. This little thing is not cool at all."

Racard rubbed his swollen eyes and complained. Buksil only recently knew Ark so he had never seen Ark use taekwondo or wrestling techniques. However, Racard had seen those techniques since the beginning so he wasn't impressed. Ark had no intention of finishing it like this.

"Racard, this time lure 5 of them."

"Eh? "Isn't that more unreasonable?"

"Shut up, just bring them as soon as possible."

Ark trained with the Mould Zombies while slowly increasing the numbers. After doing this for a day, Ark was able to deal with ten Mould Zombies without using any skills. Of course, it wasn't like his combat abilities suddenly grew after one day. He was just reviving his previous battle style using taekwondo. It didn't take that long since he hadn't been neglecting his exercise. If Ark hadn't been using his skills so much and concentrated on his actual fighting ability then he could've dealt with 20 Mould Zombies.

'That feeling seems to have returned.'

Ark gave a satisfied smile as he looked at them.

"Now it's time for you guys."

"Eh? What?"

"You guys will also be training. Racard, you used to be able to lure monsters without using the Taunt skill. But what happened to that? Razak is no different. Raza didn't make any big mistakes you didn't do very well either. This is evidence that you have become undisciplined! Now we're going to return to my original methods. I've going to revive the old training methods for a while."

"I don't want to experience the past again. Isn't our current strategies enough?"

"Do you want you other eye to become swollen as well?"

"Damn, I knew it would be like this. I knew it!"

Racard murmured with a desperate voice. Then Ark looked at Buksil and Baekgu in the corner and said.

"You two as well!"

"Huh? Why do we have to train as well?"

"Until now it didn't matter, but if you go to higher level regions then Baekgu as he is now won't be enough as your bodyguard. Baekgu needs some training to level up and become stronger. And Buksil as well. Didn't you have some trouble with filming the video? You have to learn what to do if your eyeball is attacked. Take it out!"

Eh eh? Eh eh eh? Wait a minute. Hik!"

Ark took out Buksil's eyeball and turned it round and round. Ark threw it and kicked it.

"What do you feel?"

"W-what are you doing.....ouch!"

Buksil staggered and sat down as he felt nausea. But Ark just declared sharply.

“Bah, how can you take videos in this state? If you’re going to shoot a video while scouting the area and foraging ingredients then you need to handle this much.”

“That, that is.....!”

“I won’t allow anyone to decline!”

Ark raised his fist and threatened them. Ssak ssak ssak ssak, ssak ssak ssak ssak?

Radun also looked at Ark with surprise eyes. ‘Dad, what should I do?’ He seemed to ask.

“Not you, you’ve been doing well. Aigoo, you cutie.”

“Ooh, this is discrimination!”

“Shut up, training is starting!”

So Ark and his group began three days of hellish training.....

“Racard C-plan, lure three of the zombies without using Taunt!”

“Yes! Ya, you beep-beep-guys! Bring it on, come on, come on!”

Razak glared at them and unleashed a barrage of curses. Although the zombies didn’t really understand, they instinctively felt anger at the curses and followed him. Ark looked at Razak and Baekgu and nodded.

“Razak, block two of the Mould Zombies with your shield. Baekgu, you will approach and attack the zombies while Razak is stopping them with his shield. Go!”

Clack clack clack!

“Yes, Captain!”

Razak and Baekgu moved to their positions at Ark's command. Although they had failed several times at the beginning, now the execution of the strategy reached 80% after the training. This was the outcome of the hellish training for three days. Now Ark didn't have to follow their movements every time anymore. His summons now listened to him again after the discipline. And Baekgu who participated in the hell training had gained 4 levels. He was not the only one who changed. While Razak and Baekgu finished the two blocked Mould Zombies, Ark lured the remaining one towards Buksil's eyeball.

"Buksil, bring me a memory crystal!"

"Yes!"

Buksil quickly pulled out the memory crystals from the eyeballs. Then he played the dramatic footage from the crystal. Buksil hadn't been resting in the meantime and had been tirelessly working to make the image of the battle seem filled with urgency. After the training to withstand violence, he had managed to take the scene of Razak's fight from dozens of angles.

"Okay, it's a pass."

"T-thank you!"

Buksil sighed with relief and replied. Ark gathered Buksil and his summon again before speaking.

"Now the training is finished. First, I think it's admirable that you 'volunteered' for the training. What the? What happened to your expressions? Well, are you dissatisfied?"

"Of course not!"

"Anyway, now it's time to show the results of your training against the zombies in the cave! Razak, Racard, from now on we'll be capturing the dungeon. And Buksil and Baekgu will collect the food necessary for it. If you pinch me dungeons success going forward will need more military capacity. You've succeeded in the training so there is no need to worry

while collecting ingredients. While collecting the ingredients, you'll also take the videos and Baekgu will take care of any zombies that escape. Can you do it?"

"Yes, we can do it!"

All of his bruised companions shouted simultaneously. He didn't know how long it would last but they were currently showing the results of the discipline. Anyway, Baekgu and Buksil left to gather ingredients while Ark took Razak and Racard to begin the dungeon exploration. Animosity filled his summons eyes as they looked at the cave.

Act 4: The Phantom Hourglass

Kuaaaa!

The nails of the Mould Zombies aimed at his neck. The deeply rotted nails gave off a bad stench! Ark reflexively dodged the Mould Zombie's attack. He avoided the nail, turned his body and kicked. The Mould Zombies ran into the wall and stumbled. After combining Sword Mastery with kicks, his movement skills had increased by leaps and bounds. The Mould Zombie that was hit stiffened and became 'Stunned.' Even if skills that contained mana were blocked, he had used 'Eyes of the Cat' beforehand to find the weakness of the Mould Zombies to cause the 'Stunned' state.

Kwa kwa kwa kwa kwak!

He swung his sword like a rapid fire gun and pierced through the Mould Zombies. Black blood dripped from the holes in the zombie as it stumbled.

"Master, the next fellows are coming!"

Then he heard Racard's voice from behind him. He turned his head and saw 5 Mould Zombies running.

“Razak!”

When Ark raised his voice, Razak who had been taking care of other zombies came running. He raised his shield and pushed two Mould Zombies. Meanwhile, Ark ran up to the remaining three and used sidekicks. The Mould Zombies who had been kicked flew back several metres and slammed into the wall. However, the zombies just opened their mouths after landing and ran after him again.

‘The saliva!’

The Mould Zombies in the dungeon weren’t that high level. The difference with the swamp zombies was that the cave ones had poisonous saliva. The Mould Zombies spat their saliva and Ark rotated on the axis of his left foot, and did a 360 degree spin kick. The jaws of the zombies snapped shut as the saliva gushed out from the side. That wasn’t all. The neck of the Mould Zombies rotated after being kicked. The zombies couldn’t grasp the direction because their heads were on backwards and wandered around crashing into walls.

‘It’s a lot easier now that my body is moving comfortably.’

Ark laughed as he looked at the Mould Zombies wandering around with their heads backwards. It was incomparable to Ark’s movement a few days ago. The conversion of sword and kicks increased his reaction rate..... He could feel the difference in his body after his physical ability rose. But the outcome of the training wasn’t simply his performance. Over the past few days, Ark had sealed his skills and only trained in his physical abilities. It was all because he wanted to defeat the dungeon. However, his training ended up different from his original intent and brought an unexpected result.

‘I never even considered it. The issues of only relying on skill-based battles.’

Skill based combat was straightforward and convenient. It was unnecessary to explain. If he used his skills then he could dispose of the Mould Zombies in less than a minute. However, using generals would

only take 3 minutes or 2 is he dealt a lot of critical hits. The battles were longer so of course he lost more health and it took a lot more time to restore it. That's why Ark had mainly been using skill based combat. However, he had forgotten one thing while focusing on the speed of using skills.

Ark's primary attack skill was Sword-Hand combat. Since he mainly used skills, his Sword-Hand combat was unable to increase in proficiency. And Ark's Sword-Hand combat was advanced. If he didn't reach any special enlightenment in the related skill then it was impossible to increase beyond advanced. But that changed after he started to use Sword-Hand combat in battle again. Although he initially faced 3~4, he was eventually able to face 6~7 opponents. If he faced more than 10, his life was really in the balance. But even if he was in a critical condition, Ark never used any skills. Even if he died, he wouldn't use skills. If he was in a crisis then he would quickly escape. This was the training he decided on. Practicing martial arts was a hundred times better than skills. This weren't techniques that could be easily learnt. In the midst of a crisis, he used martial arts techniques.

Japan's legendary swordsman, Miyamoto Musashi was the originator of modern kendo that was based on a three stage level. Modern kendo had 9 stages of qualification but they wouldn't be a match against Musashi. The reason was clear. Modern students practiced in a safe environment and was no match against someone who polished their skills risking their lives. The explanation was slightly redundant, once Ark made a decision he decided to carry it through. If he wasn't positive about it than nothing would be done! That was Ark's philosophy. Even if Ark was facing a huge mountain, he stuck to his resolution of only using his sword and kicks. After fighting at the Evil Silrion, his Sword-Hand combat had been stuck at 500 but it finally broke through.

-The proficiency of Sword-Hand combat has risen after a lot of experience.

Sword-Hand Combat (Master, Passive 503/1000): You have become a

Master in Sword-Hand combat.

You have completely understood the special qualities of the sword and you are able to draw out its performance by 100%. You have received additional damage when using a sword or knuckle, and your evasion and critical hit has risen considerably. In addition, there is a 20% chance of fully understanding the attributes of the sword.

<Overall combat ability increases by 50%. The effect of Sword-Hand combat means that wearing a shield will become a baggage. When using kicks, the probability of causing a random state to a small monster is 10%, a medium sized monster 8% and a large monster 5%. When a difficult technique succeeds, the probability of causing an abnormal state will also increase>

* Master additional effect (Deferred Strike: There is a 20% to deal double damage with one strike. The second damage will only have 50% of your base damage.

‘Sword-Hand combat has reached the Master stage!’

Ark’s mouth opened as he confirmed the information. Overall combat ability increased by 50%! It wasn’t simply that his damage had increased. It meant that all his combat capabilities including defense, attack speed and reaction rate had increased! Ever since then, Ark felt like it was easier to move his body. In addition, his probability of causing abnormal states had increased. But he was able to feel the effects of Sword-Hand combat increasing thanks to Deferred Strike.

Understanding the characteristics of the sword gave him a chance of dealing double damage! It didn’t seem that wonderful when reading the information window. It dealt two attacks but the second one only did 50% of his base damage. It was better to use Dark Blade. However, using it was completely different from the explanation. It had a 20% probability. That was one in five strikes. But that was only simple probability. Just because there was a 1/6 chance of landing a 6 on a die didn’t mean the six would appear. The six could come out but it also might not come out. There was also a 30% or 40% chance of throwing a

6. The odds might contribute more than 30%, 40%. That also applied to Deferred Strike.

“Now!”

Ark ran up to the zombies who had their necks twisted and swung his sword. There was two ringing sounds as the zombies were struck twice and their health drained out. Although there was only a 20% chance, the odds of Deferred Strike occurring increased by leaps and bounds in this situation. If his first attack was a critical hit which dealt 150% damage then the second strike would deal 75% damage. That was 225% damage with one strike.

“If their necks are twisted then it is easy to deal a critical hit!” Ark rapidly stabbed the Mould Zombies and they tore apart like sandpaper. The zombies were successively cut by the critical hits and Deferred Strike!

The Mould Zombies became like a rag and collapsed. Meanwhile, Razak and Racard who had survived the hell training disposed of one of the zombies and approached the other one.

“Now, hit it hard with the shield!”

Clack clack clack clack!

Racard and Razak worked together to attack the zombie. This was also the outcome of his hell training. Ark’s pets also didn’t use skills and now they were able to battle against level 400 zombies. Their abilities were equivalent to level 280 but it was possible to defeat the zombies if it was 2 against 1. In this situation Ark’s pets could hold their own so he was quite satisfied.

‘If they can handle it then it is better not to interfere.’

Ark relaxed and watched the battle between his pets and the zombie.

“Hahaha, we won, we won!”

Racard cheered as they finally defeated the Mould Zombie after 4 minutes.

“You still have a long way to go. You have to be able to defeat one in 2 minutes.”

“Sheesh, would it hurt for you to give a compliment?”

“I’ll give you a compliment when you finish it in 2 minutes.”

Ark smiled at Racard who grunted. Anyway, it was different from his initial worries and he steadily ventured into the cave. There were many Mould Zombies so his progress wasn’t fast, but Ark’s purpose wasn’t to clear the dungeon. Yes, his first goal was to collect the necessary ingredients for his Necromancer’s essence.

‘I have almost all the materials.’

In addition, the Mould Zombies in the cave was level 400. He received 200% experience every time a zombie was defeated so his level increased quickly. After a few days, he gained 8 levels and reached 357. It was four times the speed of his hunting in the swamp. However, the regeneration of the Mould Zombies in the cave was slower than the swamp so it was slightly regretful.

‘But clearing the dungeon would become even more difficult if the regeneration speed of the Mould Zombies was fast.’

Even though he could deal with 10 Mould Zombies without using skills, he still had to use the disinfectant. Because of the duration of the disinfectant, he had to repeatedly invade the cave and then retreat. If the regeneration speed of the zombies was quick then it would take three or four times his current speed.

“This will soon come to an end.”

Ark muttered after scanning the map. He used his cartographer skill to reveal that the map was 95% cleared. He could use the disinfectant one more time so if he was quick then he could clear the dungeon.

“Okay, let’s go.”

Ark had recovered his health using food and stood up. After taking care of the Mould Zombies in the area, he once again entered the cave. The effects of the disinfectant would end in 20 minutes. Ark followed the single passage until he reached a dead end.

“Eh? What the?”

Ark stared with bewildered eyes at the dead end. He came all the way here only to encounter a dead end? Well, he originally came here to search for the Monkfish mushrooms. However, he still hadn’t found any of the mushrooms. Even though he searched the wall, he couldn’t find a hidden device. Instead, he discovered a pool of deep black water in a corner.

‘Wait, if the Monkfish mushroom grows in this cave then wouldn’t the water make it flow into the swamp?’

And there was black water on the floor throughout the cave. The place that water was coming from was the pool.

‘That stagnant water should connect to where the water is being supplied from. The puddle might be connected to other places.’

“You guys follow me.”

Ark plunged into the pool of water without hesitation. Nothing was visible in front of him once he entered the black water. Ark used his hand to check the around the pool. After a short time, he felt where the current of water was flowing. It meant the current of water was coming from somewhere!

‘Over here!’

Ark pulled out a stone and the current of water reversed. Ark took a deep breath before diving back down and following the waterway that had been formed.

'I have to reach the top. The place where the tunnel emerges will be clear!'

"Puah!"

He swam upwards and breached the surface of the water. Ark took a deep breath and looked around. The place where Ark came up was a side wall in a pool where a underground waterfall was flowing into. The water from the pool seemed to be flowing into the swamp via the cave.

"There's no doubt. The Monkfish mushrooms is somewhere here."

Ark exited the water and checked the underground space. He had no mana to use Eyes of the Cat so he couldn't see the environment clearly. However, his eyes gradually adapted to the cave and he was able to grasp the approximate shape.

'Is this place like a mine?'

All the walls of the underground was formed from a type of black rock. After rubbing his hand against it, a black soot that seemed like coal streaked his hand. While crossing the cave, he often saw a coal like rock. The water that ran through the cave seemed to be black because of the coal dust that had fallen. Then Racard who was flying ahead shouted.

"Master, mushroom, mushroom!"

"Ah, is it the Monkfish mushrooms?"

Ark shouted with joy and rushed in Racard's direction. Was that the mushrooms near the lump of coal? It was the Monkfish mushrooms that Ark was looking for! The Monkfish mushrooms were present in the gaps between the coal.

"Hahaha, it is a jackpot!"

Ark raised his arm and instantly picked the mushroom. He didn't rest and picked the mushrooms but they showed no signs of decreasing. The

Monkfish mushrooms had a tremendous effect when used properly. Even if he called Buksil and Baekgu then it wasn't possible to collect all the mushrooms.

"If it's like this then it can be used."

As long as there was enough mushrooms then he would have a constant supply of it. This meant he could catch high level monsters faster. Ark scraped the mushroom one by one as he dreamed of a pleasant hunt. The mushrooms gradually piled in his bag.

-This fellow dared to dirty my refuge!

A deafening roar shook the space and a red warning message appeared.

-The boss monster Immortal Lich 'Karad' has appeared.

'Eek? Boss monster?'

Ark flinched and turned his head. Something wrapped in a black aura walked into the dark space. Karad wasn't a skeleton or a zombie, but he looked like an undead monster when some bones exposed. He was covered with a hooded cloak and was holding a long stick. The outfit was just like a magician. In traditional fantasy, a lich was a magician who became corrupted in their search for immortality. Before Karad was an undead, he had been a magician.

'Boss monster..... Thank you.'

A satisfied smile spread on Ark's face as he hurriedly got up and took an attack posture. 'Boss monster=big rewards' was the formula in Ark's head.

'I found a large supply of mushrooms and now there's even a boss monster!'

He was grateful to the dungeon. Of course, he didn't like all of the situation. Due to the special effect of the cave, Ark couldn't use mana.

As well as his attack skills, he didn't have enough mana to use Eyes of the Cat to determine Karad's level and weaknesses.

'But the opponent looks like a magician.'

He had fought Jewel in the Evil Silrion and Seutandal until he was bored. Therefore Ark was well aware of a magician's weakness. A magician had low defense and slow reaction rates. Instead, the attack power of their magic was incredibly strong but it took time to complete the spell which was also a weakness. If the magician wasn't given any time to complete the spell then they were a weak opponent.

In his current state, he might be a match for a magician.

'Of course, he can still use Warp.....'

Luckily the underground area wasn't wide. Even if Karad used Warp, there were only a few places he could go. Ark had confidence that he could kick the boss before he completed any strong spells.

'I also have my summons as well.'

If he arranged his pets in the directions Karad could warp to then he could interrupt the spell casting.

'I have magic resistance so I can ignore low ranking magic and move forward for close combat.'

Ark completed a rough strategy plan.

-Death for intruders.....!

Karad stretched his hand and cast a spell and black magic arrows flowed out like a rain shower.

'That's a huge number. I can't avoid everything. If that's the case.....!'

Ark hid his face and neck with both arms and went running forward. If he took that posture then the damage wouldn't decrease. However, if he covered the head and neck then he decreased the chances of a critical

hit. Ark's health quickly went down as he was hit by the magic arrows. However, the damage wasn't that much compared to how many times he was hit. His magic resistance had increased thanks to the Mongoose immortality pills.

"Racard, Razak, spread out to both corners!"

Ark approached Karad and shouted. Ark arrived and prepared just in case Karad used Warp. As expected, Karad instantly chanted the spell for Warp as Ark ran up. Warp was a teleporting skill but it was impossible to designate the location. He appeared in the right hand corner and prepared to use the magic arrow skill again. But Razak was there with his shield and used it to stop the spell.

"Good job, now take your time and attack with your shield!"

Clack clack clack, clack clack clack clack!

Razak subsequently used his shield to prevent Karad from using Warp. Nevertheless, it was impossible for Razak to take care of a boss by himself.

-You impertinent skeleton!

Karad swung his cane and Razak flew back a few metres. Karad then started chanting a spell. However, Ark had already rushed towards Karad before the spell was completed.

Pepepepeng! Snap!

His sword penetrated the body. He continued with a flashy spin kick. Karad stumbled as he was hit on the temple and retreated. Ark didn't miss the opportunity and kicked out in rapid succession. A magician had to chant in order to use magic so 'Stun' was more useful than other abnormal states. As he expected, Karad was unsteady and couldn't remember the chants.

-Ugh, y-you.....!

Karad used the gap in his attacks to once again disappear with Warp.

“Everybody be alert!”

Razak and Racard glanced around carefully at Ark’s command. After a while, Karad’s form was once again seen. But this time, he was lucky and moved to a back corner. Ark and his summons were waiting in the opposite direction.

“Sheesh, Racard stop him!”

“U-understood!”

Racard flew towards Karad. However, this time Karad was slightly faster.

-Take this you dirty intruders. Dark Arrows!

“Aaaaack!”

Black magic arrows flew from the hands of Karad. Racard screamed as he was hit by the magic arrow and fell. Meanwhile, Ark once again ran through the arrows but was too late to prevent Karad from using Warp again. If Ark couldn’t stop Warp then he wouldn’t be able to deal with Karad. It was even worse since he couldn’t use skills. However, Ark wasn’t alone.

-Hahaha, I’ll let you regret attacking me from hell!

Magic.....

Daeng kang!

-Ouch!

Karad stumbled as a shield hit him on the side of the head. This time Razak had appeared in front of Karad.....The battle was Karad was like a lottery. If he appeared near Ark or his summons then Ark would dominate. Conversely, if Karad appeared somewhere else then he would

dominate. No matter how quickly Ark ran, Karad would be able to use magic then escape with Warp. That continued for 20 minutes.

“Huk huk huk, Radun used Stalking to determine his tracks.....”

Ark muttered while being short of breath. If the magician escaped using Warp then Radun can figure out the location using Stalking! It was the skill which caused Jewel despair. But as expected, Ark couldn't use Stalking. He didn't have enough money. Eventually someone had to collapse. Ark and his summons were exhausted after running and flying around for 20 minutes. In addition, he received damage running after Karad and only had 30% health remaining. In addition, their magic resistance was low so Racard and Razak were in a critical condition.

‘But Karad's health is also low.’

Ark looked for Karad again as he disappeared using Warp. He willingly submitted to being hit by a few shots of magic when approaching Karad for the chance to land a few kicks and cause an abnormal status. Even if he was a boss monster, Karad was a magician so Ark dealt a lot of damage to him. Karad had broken bones here and there that were hanging out of his flesh. Although he couldn't see the monster's status using Eyes of the Cat, he was able to approximately guess the remaining health. Ark guessed that Karad had 20% health at the most.

‘If this continues then I can win!’

Ark was convinced of that. Then Karad once again appeared on the opposite side. The distance was approximately 50 meters!

‘Damn, guess I need to get hit again.’

Ark used his arms to protect his vital areas and ran towards Karad. It took approximately 4 seconds for Karad to chant the spell for Dark Arrows. When calculating the speed Ark could run 30 metres, the spell would definitely be completed. But this time the spell wasn't completed by the time he arrived. Ark lowered his arm with a doubtful look.

-.....*The power of resurrection!*

Karad finished chanting a long spell and opened his eyes wide before shouting. Then the broken bones were reformed and the tattered pieces of skin stuck together again. Karad's body was being recovered at an absurd rate.

"What, what the.....?"

Ark stopped with surprise as Karad smiled coldly and muttered.

-Kukukukuku, what's with that expression? Did you think you could kill me? I am an immortal Lich. It is impossible for you to knock down this body! Take this, Dark Arrows!

The magic arrows repeatedly hit Ark's body. After being hit by dozens of magic arrows, Ark lost his balance and fell to the ground. He received a critical hit and he lost 8% health, but that wasn't the problem. They had fought for 20 minutes and had finally managed to get Karad in a critical condition. In exchange for that, Ark had lost 70% of his health and his pets were in a critical condition. The outcome of that was Karad's broken bones and torn flesh. But now all that was recovered? What happened to the torn flesh and broken bones? When he checked Karad's state, he saw that the recovery magic was being gradually applied and wasn't an immediate effect. However, the recovery speed was fast and could be compared to that of a normal priest. It was likely that 50% had already been recovered. If he continued using Warp and recovery magic then how long would Ark last?

'Damn, being unable to determine the enemy's situation is bad. Is there a countermeasure to that magic? I need to either not give him time for the recovery magic or my attack power needs to exceed his recovery rate.'

That was impossible if Ark wasn't able to use any skills. In addition, he only had 20% health left and with no mana he had no chance of winning. If Karad could recovery then there was no way to survive. Ark shook his head forcefully.

'No, I can't die like this!'

Ark clenched his teeth tightly and swung his sword.

-Huhuhu, don't you know that's useless?

However, Karad instantly used Warp. Ark vainly hit the wall. His blade scratched against the wall like a flint and a spark flew up. His sword had hit a lump of coal so it was a natural result. But after that something unthinkable occurred. The spark touched Ark's sleeve and burst into flames.

"Heok, what, what the?"

Ark hurriedly withdrew and the flames faded away. Ark carefully looked at the arm where the flames occurred and understood the situation. While attacking Karad, he had got the coal dust on his arm. When the spark struck the powder, combustion happened and a fire occurred.

"Damn, that was surprising."

Ark cried out with irritation and turned his body. Had he breathed in too much coal dust while fighting Karad? Then an idea came to his head when thinking about the spark causing flames.

'Wait? Coal dust? Maybe..... No, it is possible if it's in this space!'

"Razak, Racard, the coal!"

Ark suddenly raised his head and shouted. Racard who had been searching for Karad's location muttered with a strange expression.

"Eh? What are you talking about? Has all the coal dust affected your head?"

"That's right!"

"Then your head really is full of coal dust?"

"You fool, that's not it. Fill this place with coal dust!"

"What? Master. Are you sane? Won't we choke on coal dust if this place is filled with it? Did you really go crazy? It doesn't matter to Razak who doesn't breath, but I have the soft vampire lungs! I don't want to die because of this!"

"Shut up and just do as I say! Razak too!"

Ark shouted while frantically hitting the wall with his sword. After hitting it with his sword, Ark kicked the coal dust piled on the floor and scattered it into the air. Razak also hit the wall with his shield and sprinkled the coal dust.

"I'm going to die soon anyway so it doesn't matter how it happens."

Racard sighed and flapped his wings, causing a wind that scattered the dust.

-What, what the?

Karad looked at the exposed coal dust with confusion. He tried to see through the darkness and the coal dust but it wasn't that easy to find Ark.

-You cheeky bastard, you think you can get away from me like this?

Karad yelled and blindly shot his magic arrows.

"Cough, cough, not at all. Cough, it's just starting now!"

Ark's form became visible within the coal dust. Although his mouth and nose was covered with his mantle, coal dust entered his lungs every time he breathed. In addition, it felt like there was gravel within his eyes every time he blinked. However, there was a vague smile of satisfaction on Ark's face.

"Racard, Razak, jump into the pool!"

Ark shouted while running towards the pool, dragging his sword against the ground behind him.

Kararararang!

When the sword blade encountered the ground, sparks flew up. The sparks flew upwards and spread at an incredible pace.

“Now!”

Ark ran and plunged into the pool underneath the waterfall.

Flash! Kwa kwa kwa kwang!

There was a sudden bright glare and at the same time there was a loud roaring sound. Then a massive hot storm swept through the underground area. Kwa kwa kwa kwang, the rocks couldn't tolerate the heat and started falling. It was to the extent that the vibration even shook the water in the pool.

“Puah, it's a success!”

After a while, Ark emerged from the water and shouted.

“Puah, what, what? What was that just now?”

Racard looked around with wide eyes. In just a few seconds, the underground area had become a mess. The coal dust which filled the space just then wasn't visible anymore. The rocks on the ceiling couldn't endure the blast and fell to the ground, scattering in all directions and there were still some flames burning. The view was like the results of a bombing!

“M-Master, what type of magic did you use?”

“It's not magic. Just science. No, isn't it just basic physics and mineralogy? That's it.”

Ark replied with a wicked grin. That's right. Some people might have already noticed, but Ark had come up with a method to explode the coal

dust! He would explain the dust explosion in advance. The very small particles floating through the air was in the range of the sparks and exploded. It was a typical example of a coal dust explosion. If never happened in these days, but explosions at coal mines in the 70's wasn't that rare. He had remembered learning about coal explosions during school. As expected, people learned from seeing things.

'But I didn't think it would work like this.'

"I didn't know it would be that extreme! Huhuhu, then that fellow's bones would be.....heok!"

Racard was laughing when he turned around and screamed. Ark's face turned to follow Racard's gaze and hardened.

-Ooooooh.....t-that bastard.....you arrogant human.....!

Karad stood in the centre of a small fire and swayed. The body had become tattered after the explosion but it was still holding on.

"U-unbelievable..... He survived that explosion?"

Ark muttered with incredulous eyes. But Ark had overlooked one thing. Karad was a magician monster so he had incredibly high flame resistance. Then Ark's ears heard Karad's voice chanting a spell.

"This is the recovery magic he used before! Ah, no!"

Ark jumped out of the pool with an aghast face. If that guy used his recovery magic then his recovery rate would be faster than Ark could damage Karad. Eventually the situation would be like the coal explosion never happened. No, it would be worse. Karad wasn't stupid so he wouldn't fall for the same trick again.

"Summon Ghost Knight Corps!"

The space warped and the ghost knight corps appeared. But before the ghost knights could charge, Karad laughed and muttered.

-It's too late. The power of resurrection!

At the same time, Karad's body started recovering at a quick speed.

-Kill the evil!

The ghost knights rushed towards Karad at Ark's order. The 30 knights attacked with their swords and spears. Karad's body was torn every time he was attacked. However, the power of recovery was already restoring the flesh and bones. Although there were 30 knights, it was a low level skill so the attack damage was also low. Of course, 30 people were attacking so the damage was larger than the recovery rate. But they couldn't defeat Karad within 5 seconds.

-Sheesh, if only there was a bit more time.....

The ghost knights stared at Karad and disappeared. That was what Ark wanted to say.

-Huhuhuhu. Is that all? Do you have anything remaining?

Karad laughed after the ghost knights disappeared and looked at Ark. In fact, Karad wasn't in as good a situation as he pretended. After being pushed by the ghost knights, Karad was broken like tofu. After the attack from the ghost knight corps, Karad only had 1-2% health left. But the power of resurrection was still being applied. While Ark was staring blankly, Karad's health was still being recovered at an incredible speed.

'Incorrect. It's over. My general attack can't keep up with his recovery speed!'

Ark sat down with a thud and sighed desperately. Suddenly a black form flickered on Karad's chest. At the same time, a message window appeared in front of Ark.

-Karad's health has fallen below 3% and you can extract the demonic aura.

'What? Demonic? Then that guy has a demonic monster?'

Ark suddenly raised his head. After his health had fallen below 3% thanks to the ghost knights attacks, the Demonic Seal skill was activated.

If Demonic Seal succeeded, then the remaining health of the monster would be ignored and it would die. However, the power of resurrection meant that Demonic Seal wasn't automatically activated when it fell below 3%. Then Ark stood up and shouted.

"Demonic Seal!"

Chwajijijijik!

Instantly a bright light emerged from Ark's hand and penetrated the chest. Then the black aura which had been flickering on his chest flickered and emerged. The light was dragging it out. Then Karma started to harden into a jellified state.

-Kuaaaaaak, you..... What did you do.....!

-You have succeeded in extracting the demonic aura.

Please select the target to be sealed into.

"That's it, Radun. Ancient Sword!"

Ssak ssak, ssak ssak ssak ssak!

Radun spat out the Ancient Sword from the underground crypt. Next the light moved to the Ancient Sword and it was absorbed into the sword.

-Demonic Seal was successful.

Thanks to the Demonic Seal, the attribute of the item has changed.

-Kuaaaaaak!

At that moment, Karad screamed and was torn apart. After a short while, the rotten flesh changed and a vague form rose from Karad's body. It was Karad's soul which had been trapped in the body after he changed into a Lich. He seemed to suffer from a pained head for a while

before it slowly raised. With white hair and beard, he seemed like one of the Oberium ghosts.

“Were you a magician of Oberium?”

-That's right.

The ghost magician who had been confined to Karad's body sighed and answered. Just like the ghosts of Oberium, Ark's intimacy with Karad was at 100% after freeing him. So Ark could receive answers to his many questions from the ghost magician. As Ark expected, this was originally a coal mine. But one day, something strange spread from this coal mine. The miners working in this place lost all their willpower and the incident spread. The Lord of this region sent people to investigate the incident- before falling under the curse, this area belonged to the Lord of Oberium- and a magician was dispatched for the investigation.

-After descending down here, I released it was the legendary Mana Hall.

“Mana Hall?”

-Yes, the Mana Hall is a place which can manipulate the source of mana and there are two types of Mana Halls. One Mana Hall releases infinite mana while the other Mana Hall absorbs the surrounding mana. The Mana Hall which exists deep in this place is the 2nd type. In some rare cases, the power of the Mana Hall is emitted to the outside but this Mana Hall has dwelled under the earth for a long time.

The magician instantly told the Lord of the investigation results. At that time, the forces of Oberium was preparing for war against the forces of darkness. After the Lord heard this news, he ordered the magician to find a way to utilize the power of the Mana Hall. If they could control how mana is sucked out then it could be used against the forces of darkness. The magician who received the order instantly closed the mine and began to study it.

“Did you find a way?”

Ark asked with curious eyes but the magician shook his head.

-With my knowledge, it wasn't possible to find a way to handle the great forces of nature. Even when the miners dug the soil, it lost its power the moment it exited outside.

There seemed to be some restrictions on this power.

-But then I found something unexpected. I discovered a stone that could absorb the magic even though it looked the same as other stones. After investigating the stone that could absorb the magic of the earth, I discovered that it was a Hearthstone.

'Hearthstone!'

Ark's eyes flashed. He had obtained a socket item from the Magic Institute. Ark had found a Hearthstone in the territory of the vampire Lord but he couldn't find anymore. He was seeking more Hearthstones so it was natural for Ark's eyes to light up at the information. But before Ark could dig for more information, the magician sighed and shook his head.

-But.....

The moment the magician touched the Hearthstone, the curse magic was activated in Oberium. The strength of the curse magic was enormous. The abundant earth was changed into a swamp with a rotten smell. All the living beings caught in the curse became the dead wandering the earth. Ark suddenly had an idea while listening and asked.

"Then all the undead within the swamp were also residents of Oberium?"

Then shouldn't Demonic Seal have been triggered when he killed the Mould Zombies if they were Oberium residents? But the magician quickly answered Ark's question.

-That's different. The undead in this region emerged afterwards from the impact of the curse.

Anyway, the magician in this place encountered the curse magic but he didn't become a dead person like the other residents. Was it stopped because the Mana Hall absorbed some of the mana? Or maybe it was because he was in the mine? The curse magic which affected the magician was incomplete. However, the form which resulted was more horrifying than the full curse. He was neither dead nor alive.....the magician had to endure the pain of his decaying body while still living.

-Even suicide didn't stop the Dark Lord's curse magic. Thanks to my rotting body, I started searching for ways to defeat the curse magic. Finally I came up with a way to use the power of the Mana Hall within the Hearthstone.

The Hearthstone found in the Mana Hall! The Mana Hall managed to somewhat stop the curse because it absorbed some of the mana, so couldn't the power of the Hearthstone be used to absorb some the curse encroaching on his body? But unlike his expectations, the magic of the Hearthstone was unable to be controlled after it collided with the curse magic and in the end the magician was turned into a Lich. Therefore Karad became immune to the power of the Mana Hall because he absorbed the same type of magic from the Hearthstone.

-Now I can finally be liberated from my pain.

The magician said and then pointed somewhere. Suddenly a cloudy light slowly engulfed the magician's body. The magician spoke it a voice filled with deep emotion as his body gradually faded.

-My time has already passed. Thank you God for this.

The magician said before he completely disappeared. Unlike the residents of Oberium, the reason, the magician's demonic magic wasn't that strong. It was weak because the curse magic had collided with the Hearthstone. So unlike the residents of Oberium, the magician entered heaven not long after the demonic magic was extracted. Since the magician's demonic aura was weakened, the japtem which it was sealed into didn't change as much as the items in Oberium. But there was still a reward for releasing the magician separately. After the magician disappeared, he received a lot of experience.

-You have received 30% additional experience for using Demonic Seal.

-Your level has risen.

-Your level has risen.

-Your level has risen.....

Whenever Demonic Seal was successfully used, he would receive an extra 30% experience. Thanks to that, Ark gained 7 levels in one breath.

‘Is this okay?’

Ark laughed as he went to the corpse of Karad.

Mantle with Strange Power (Rare)

Armour type: Mantle

Durability: 25/60

Defense: 25

Weight: 20

User restriction: Level 250 and more

A high-class mantle used by high ranking magicians of Oberium. This cloak is made from the fur of the legendary Rakurisa and has the effect of boosting the wearer’s mental power and vitality.

However, this cloak has also absorbed the strange power of the Lich and has an added special effect of recovering vitality. Karad was unable to receive the Hearthstone’s endless ability to absorb mana, it was able to obtain its immortal ability from this cloak.

<Option: Health +200, Mana +200>

<Special Option (Power of Resurrection) When 2000 mana is consumed, 1000 of the wearer’s health will be restored>

In New World, there were rare stones which could absorb the magic around it and these were the Hearthstones. The nature of the stone would change depending on where it is buried. This stone had absorbed the Mana Hall's ability to drain mana. When it encountered the power of the curse magic, the reaction was explosive and the Hearthstone lost its strength and became a common stone.

"Ohh, a rare mantle!"

Ark's eyes shone. But when he read the information window, the item wasn't that great. Although it gave 200 extra mana and health, the special option was a little too low. Consuming 2000 mana just to restore 1000 health? It was possible for Karad who had infinite mana but how could he use it?

"The Hearthstone is also regretful."

Ark looked regretfully at the 'Hearthstone which lost its power.' The Hearthstone had the same ability to absorb mana as the Mana Hall. Thanks to the Hearthstone, Karad had gained the ability of infinite mana. While the effect was shown in the monster, there was no guarantee that a user would get the same effect. While Karad had used the 'Mantle with Strange Power' for his enormous recovery ability, the effect on the item dropped lower. But even if the performance hadn't dropped, the ability to absorb mana was extremely rare. While New World had mana recovery potions, those potions were ten times more expensive than health recovery potions. On the other hand, the amount required for his skills would increase when the skill levelled up so he would always lack mana. Any user would drool at the idea of a Hearthstone which absorbed mana.

"If my mana was able to replenish quickly then I can show the true power of this cloak....."

It was regretful.

"A magician who absorbed the power of the Mana Hall could create a Hearthstone. Even if the special effects of the Mana Hall stops at the

mine, the power still remains. In other words, if the Hearthstone is buried again then wouldn't it absorb the power of the Mana Hall?"

But when he worked as the vampire's slave, he discovered that it took hundreds of years for the Hearthstone to absorb the magic around it. Even if it was buried again, it would only become a Hearthstone after hundreds of years. No one would bury a stone and expect to survive the hundreds of years it took to become a hearthstone.

"Well, it can't be helped."

Ark turned away from the body with dissatisfaction. Then something came to Ark's head all of a sudden and he murmured.

"Wait? Is a few hundred years truly necessary?"

Time.... Ark had an item related to time. After defeating Karma, Ark had received the mysterious artifact Phantom Hourglass which allowed him to control time. It could be used to turn scrap iron into original items, but the number of uses was limited so it was too valuable to use in that manner.

'Can't I bury the Hearthstone and then use Time Acceleration on it?'

Wouldn't that create a Hearthstone? In any case, Ark dug a hole and buried the Hearthstone. Then he raised the Phantom Hourglass over it and a message window appeared.

-You have used the Phantom Hourglass.

<You can turn it back 100 years or accelerate time forward 500 years at most>

"Time Acceleration!"

Then the sand at the top started to fall at a tremendous speed. Once the sand finished falling down on the other side, another message window appeared.

-The special effects of the dungeon has disappeared.

<Although 50 mana is still absorbed every second, the penalty has disappeared>

‘The special effect is gone!’

The terrain had returned to normal so that meant the Hearthstone was properly absorbing the magic. Ark pulled out the Hearthstone with a face filled with expectation.

Mana Steal Stone (Unique Hearthstone)

This Hearthstone has absorbed the magic of the Mana Hall for hundreds of years. Although the power which maintains the balance of mana stretches over thousands of metres, it does not affect the outside. But in some rare cases, it influences the earth and the property of the earth will change. This Hearthstone has absorbed the power of the Mana Hall and gained similar properties. Of course, the Hearthstone can be used as a high level magic ingredient or it can be inserted into a socket item.

<When used as a socket (Weapon Exclusive): When an enemy attacks, there is a 10% chance of absorbing 1~5% of the enemy’s mana.

The Hearthstone gave him a 10% chance of absorbing mana when used in a socket item!

..... He had hit the jackpot.

Act 5: The Knowing Eyeball

Kung kung, kung kung.

“Master, I’ve found one here!”

Baekgu's nose which was pressed to the ground twitched like a dog and he shouted.

"I understand, wait a minute."

Buksil ran over and looked through the bush, instantly finding a vegetable that looked like a carrot. But when he grabbed the stem and tried to pull it out, the root broke.

-Ingredient Foraging has failed.

<The ingredient has been damaged and it has lost its value as a cooking material>

"Damn, this one as well!"

Buksil became angry and threw the broken carrot away. Then he wiped away the sap which had dripped onto his body.

"This is making me angry. Baekgu, let's rest for a bit."

"But we haven't filled the quota for today yet."

"Eh, I don't know, it's too hot. Even if I find the ingredients, I can't successfully harvest them."

"But if you don't fill the quota....."

Baekgu started trembling with fear as he imagined what would happen. Buksil also winced and muttered.

"I'll just rest for 5 minutes."

".....Yes."

Baekgu approached the shade of a tree and kneeled down. Buksil sat down near him, took out the ingredients from his bag and sighed as he counted them. In fact, foraging the ingredients was surprisingly tough work. Didn't he have to go to the field directly to collect the ingredients? It was a mistake to think there would be a large amount of

herbs and fruits lying around. Most of them were hidden in bushes and were difficult to spot. In the swamp, the number of ingredients was half of the number normally found in other places. But the hardest part after finding it was actually gathering the ingredients.

‘The problem of finding the ingredients is solved thanks to Baekgu’s sense of smell.’

That wasn’t the only problem. In reality, it was still possible to eat the food even if it was a little damaged while digging it out. But there was no such system in New World. If he damaged it even a little bit when gathering then the ingredient couldn’t be used anymore. In addition, it was summer so it was very hot. For Buksil, foraging ingredients was no different from hard labour.

‘Even though I’m selling the ingredients, I still feel like I’m being exploited.....’

Until now, he had managed to gather approximately 30 ingredients in one day which Ark was satisfied with. Then after setting a campsite and concentrating on hunting, 50 ingredients started being consumed a day and the satisfaction decreased. Buksil’s ingredients quota also increased and he received more work. But that changed after Ark found the Suspicious Cave. The amount of dishes eaten could increase thanks to the Monkfish mushrooms so Ark requested 100 ingredients a day.

‘100 ingredients a day? No matter how much the ingredients are sold for, that is still exploitation! It means I have to work and not rest all day long.’

He could get an average of 3-5 gold for 100 ingredients. It wasn’t a bad income for one day’s worth of gathering ingredients. But he honestly didn’t care about money after working hours in the sun.

‘But.....’

The biggest problem for Buksil was that he had no other options. It became even worse after going through the hell training a few days ago. After being with Ark for a while, he knew his personality. It was only

good if he wasn't caught. That was the survival strategy he developed after travelling with Ark.

'Phew, now how will I collect the remaining ingredients? If I don't gather enough then I'll be hit..... Damn, I'm like Cinderella.'

He was abused by his stepmother (Ark) and his new older sister (the summons) and thinking about the heavy labour he was currently facing caused tears in his eyes. Then what would Baekgu be?

'I now know why people like raising pets.'

Buksil looked at Baekgu with fond eyes and Baekgu shook his tail.

'I can't imagine a New World without Baekgu anymore. Yes, I have to work hard so that Ark won't bother Baekgu. And I can earn money to provide Baekgu with food. Ayu, this is my fate.'

After providing Baekgu with food, Ark had roughly 70 silver left as profit from selling the ingredients. In order to provide Baekgu with meat, he had to make over 1 gold a day. So he had to make money. Anyway, thinking that it was for Baekgu not Ark became a source of comfort for him. Therefore Buksil stood up and said.

"More monsters appear when it is dark and it'll become more difficult so we should find them now."

"Yes, Master."

"Shall we head towards that forest this time? Let's see.....Eh? Huh? Eh eh?"

"What's wrong?"

"No, that..... Damn, it was caught."

"Caught?"

"It was caught. It appears to be caught somewhere. Please don't move."

"Is it the one attached to Ark-nim?"

"No, that's the right eyeball. The one that is caught is the left eyeball."

Buksil murmured with an irritated voice. While Buksil was picking ingredients, he also had to film the video. Buksil always left his right eyeball with Ark. So he never had both eyes because the other one was needed for scouting. Currently Baekgu was level 310. He was stronger than the monsters around here. So even as a merchant, Buksil could gather ingredients away from Ark. But he wasn't confident against monsters without Ark. Razak and Racard were summons so they were resurrected after they died, but Baekgu was an NPC. If he died then that was it. So it was always necessary to check if there were any monsters with his eyeball before moving. However, it wasn't that easy.

While his two eyeballs were set free, the magic projector was attached to his head and he always had to confirm three images at the same time while moving. So he didn't have to be in the same area to film the video. Anyway, an ordinary person like Buksil was controlling it. A person couldn't look at three screens at the same time. If he was careless even for a bit then his eyeball would sometimes hit something. He became better after going through hell training with Ark but even he had a limit.

"Damn, I'll have to take back that eyeball."

Buksil complained as he run to the forest. It was a dense forest where the bushes were overgrown. It wasn't a problem to look for the eyeball. When the eyeball was set free, there was always a separate window showing the direction of the eyeball.

"Ah, there it is. My eyeball!"

After following the arrow, he poked through the bush and was able to find the eyeball that was stuck. Buksil pulled out the eyeball from the bush and rubbed it with his sleeve. It was when he tried to send it away again. Suddenly he heard a sound from the side.

".....Are you certain?"

“.....I made the necessary preparations.....”

“.....I’m worried..... It’s been two days.....”

‘Are those voices?’

He had been here for 10 days but it was the first time he heard voices. This was an undeveloped land so there weren’t many users. He couldn’t relax because it might be a monster who talked like a person. No, he still had to be careful regardless of whether it was a monster or user.

‘If I meet a chaotic user here then it will be chaos.’

Buksil winced and his expression became tense. He hadn’t seen it until now but there was a gap in the bush where he could hear the voices. The bush seemed like it was hiding a cave. Buksil confirmed it and became worried. It was best to avoid monsters and users. But he had to collect ingredients around here for a while so there was no guarantee he wouldn’t run into them.

‘Don’t they have a partner as well? If I hide here then they can’t find me.’

Buksil pushed his eyeball carefully through the bush. He controlled the eyeball and steered it into a wide open space.

‘Aren’t they users?’

Around 15 users were gathered in the empty space. Buksil moved his eye and sneaked along the wall, managing to listen to their conversation. Then one man surveyed the area and muttered.

“It’s good that you managed to find a place like this.”

“It is better to be careful.” It is better than working in the light.”

“That is correct.”

Then a smile spread on the face of a man with a X shaped cross on his cheek called Sunfish. Then a handsome user who had been watching from the side clicked his tongue and muttered.

“Why would you choose that face when you started the game?”

“Is that how it is? It makes me look tough. Who would want a pretty face like yours? Is the Namdaemun Gate handsome? Ha, even a dog passing by would laugh at you.”

“What did you say?”

Namdaemun glared angrily at the scarred Sunfish. Then a knight crossed his arms and said.

“Shut up, please calm yourselves down.”

“I’m sorry, Jepeteu hyung-nim.”

With one single sentence from the knight, the two men withdrew with their tails between their legs. The man called Jepeteu looked down at the hobbit sitting behind the scarred man. The group in the cave was divided into two sides, and Jepeteu and the hobbit seemed to be the respective leaders.

“That is like the price of a luxury vehicle.

What happened to all the money you earned? If your merchant ships continues hitting Seutandal than that amount can be easily recovered. In addition, the law hasn’t really conflicted with the pirates yet. I just want to move my organization here.”

“The guys under me also talked like that. If a bandit group comes here than the living expenses for my subordinates will decrease.”

“Just enforce some discipline on them.”

‘Dangerous!’

Buksil became tense as he watched through the eyeball. He couldn’t completely understand everything the men said. But he understood clearly that they were chaotic users. Although he couldn’t confirm it with the 『Penetration』 scroll, it was obvious from their conversation

that they were chaotic. And chaotic users were the most dangerous thing to an isolated merchant!

‘This is serious. Chaotic users are wandering around this place.....

It was clear that those guys weren’t low level. He should return to the campsite where he left the ingredients. It was lucky that he discovered them first. Luckily they hadn’t seen Buksil so he could still escape. Buksil observed their movements with the eyeball and withdrew slowly. It was when he was carefully retreating. His heel seemed to catch on something and there was a loud sound.

“Master, it’s dangerous! Ugh!”

Baekgu grabbed Buksil then moaned and collapsed. He looked back with surprise and saw that a shining blue arrow was embedded in Baekgu’s thigh.

“Tr-trap? Baekgu!”

“What was that sound?”

“Outside. Someone tripped one of the traps outside!”

The voices of the group in the cave were clearly heard.

‘This is serious!’

Cold sweat dripped down Buksil’s back. A merchant had been discovered by 15 users. If even one chaotic user was mixed among the users then Buksil’s fate was decided. If they were pirates then the [Robbery] and [Plunder] scrolls were a basic part of their equipment. And there were 15 people. He would instantaneously become a beggar the moment he was caught.

“Baekgu, run!”

Buksil got on Baekgu’s back and shouted. However, Baekgu had an arrow in his thigh and couldn’t run properly. The group inside the cave exited with their swords drawn.

‘No, this can’t happen!’

In this desperate situation, Buksil suddenly came up with an idea.

‘That’s right, there is a way to bind their feet!’

“Stupid bastards, we’re the Seutandal’s autonomous group. You’re all surrounded!”

A loud voice was suddenly heard behind the group. The group who had ran up to Buksil flinched and started to protect their bodies. But there was nothing behind the group. Yes, the voice that was shouting just before was his eyeball! Buksil had hidden it behind the group and then used the communication feature while Baekgu quickly ran through the forest.

“What, what the?”

“There’s nothing here?”

“That bastard! He used some strange technique!”

The group belatedly realized that they had been tricked and ran after Buksil. One of the archers used ‘Eagle Eye’ on Buksil and shouted.

“T-that is..... A magic projector! A magic projector is attached to his head!”

A look of confusion spread on Jepeteu and Garrett’s face.

“What? Then he was recording everything about our meeting?”

“When did he start recording? Surely not from the beginning?”

“Damn, I don’t know. Anyway, just take away the magic projector!”

“Horse, grab the horses!”

Garrett ran into the cave and pulled out their horses. Garrett got on the horse and glared at Jepeteu.

"I thought this place was safe? What are you going to do about this problem?"

".....Don't worry about it." I'll do whatever it takes to retrieve it. Hey, tell the situation to the other kids and intercept him. The rest of you chase after him with me. Archers will take the lead."

"I understand. Track!"

The archers used tracking and chased after Buksil. The fifteen people raised a cloud of dust as they chased him.

'Damn.....'

A frustrated sigh flowed from Isyuram's mouth. He had a few trivial problems coming here.....he died because of Ark.....but Isyuram had managed to infiltrate the organization of wanted criminals. Up until then, Isyuram thought his task had succeeded. However, it had been a month and Isyuram still hadn't found anything. It was natural when thinking about it. They were wanted criminals in reality and in New World. If they were caught then they would spend between 1-10 years in jail. They also doubted their parents and siblings so it was natural not to trust Isyuram.

'I'm just lucky to be allowed in this group.....'

If he hadn't met Garam in prison then it wasn't possible for him to be here. When he initially joined, the boss Jepeteu hadn't liked it. Luckily Garam had an unexpectedly high position in the organization. Although he wasn't the second in command, he was among the top 5 out of 70 people in the organization. Thanks to Garam's active defense, he was able to join the group. However, Garam was also very careful.

"My phone number? That's a bit....."

"Why? Sometimes I might come in late so I'll have to get in contact with you."

"That is a bit difficult. Actually, I was in a small situation."

"Situation?"

"I'll gradually tell you."

Garam always used that excuse whenever he tried to pry for information. Talks between Garam and the other organization members was also the same. If they ever talked about something important, than Isyuram was always locked out and they never called each other by their real names.

'But I can't question them too closely.....'

Thanks to their many years as criminals, they were used to distrusting people. If Isyuram acted even a little bit strange then he would be sniffed out and crushed. Well, it still turned out okay. If any information about Isyuram being a part of the police leaked then his method of finding information in New World would be gone forever.

'I still haven't found anything.'

When Isyuram first entered the virtual reality world, the Special Crimes Countermeasures chief said that the criminals were tired of an isolated life. But after Isyuram examined it, he realized it wasn't the whole story. It might've begun like that but now it wasn't.

'There's no doubt about it. These guys are taking advantage of the virtual space called New World to do business.'

His awareness of games had changed by 180 degrees after playing New World. And the most startling thing about New World was the cyber money.....it was gold recognition. When Isyuram first started the game, he didn't think too much about using the 2,000 gold he had. There were people who just enjoyed the game. It was also worthless for those who didn't understand the game. It wasn't the wrong idea of course. For people who didn't play New World, gold had no value. The thing that Isyuram didn't know was the real market price of gold!

‘The game money has equal value to cash.’

1 gold was worth 10,000 won. When it was this degree than it already wasn't a simple game. In addition, New World was a game that millions of people enjoyed. Gold was a necessity. In other words, gold in New World could be changed into cash at any time or vice versa. There were many stock investment professionals who would buy or sell gold with future profit in mind. The game money moved within 1 year totalled several thousand billion won! So money in New World could also affect the economy in reality.

‘This is the blind spot of the National Police Agency investigation!’

Several hundred billion won was moved in one year thanks to the online game. The scary point was that the enormous funds moved were all anonymous. Thanks to the user personal information privacy policy that was implemented a few years ago, it was impossible to investigate the personal information. There was no way of knowing about any transactions that took place within the game. In other words, things like illegal money transactions and money laundering were all possible.

‘Illegal money laundering for gangsters or concealment of wealth or illegal gambling of politicians. There are a number of ways to take advantage of it.’

Just like the Swiss banks concealed personal information, it was able to conceal billions of money. But the National Police Agency (NPA) were still unaware of the gravity of this situation. Of course the cyber investigations team made an effort, but those measures still couldn't completely account for the virtual reality world. If criminals used the various methods of laundering illegal money in the vast virtual reality world then the NPA would have no way of tracking all that money.

‘Damn, the criminals are ahead of them but the police don't want to admit it..... Anyway, my guess is that Jepeteu and the criminals are making contact with other organizations. If I can figure out how they are contacting the other organizations then I might be able to figure out a way to catch them.....’

There was no way to hide 70 people meeting in secret. In addition, Isyuram was still a merchant despite his superhuman fighting skills and the criminals were warriors. There was no probability of success even if he only fought against 1 person.

"Hey, why does your face look so down? If you're bored then do you want to play a game of poker?"

Isyuram sighed as he sat down beside Garam. Garam had a pile of gold in front of him. The poker game involved dozens of gold. When compared to the exchange rate of 1 gold=10,000 won, that was already illegal gambling.

'I'm itchy to put on the silver handcuffs.'

"No, that's okay."

It happened when Isyuram was shaking his head. He heard the sound of a horse and someone came into the campsite panting.

"Hey, it's a serious problem!"

"Huh? What?"

"This meeting where we were finalizing the deal was recorded by someone with a magic projector and then he fled!"

"Eh? Really?"

The members of the organization threw down the cards and stood up.

"Jepeteu hyung and Garret hyung are chasing after him so hurry!"

"Damn, this is troublesome. Let's go!"

The members started flocking and making preparations to chase.

'Magic projector? Is that an item that can store a video? Then this was an opportunity! It must be something important if those guys are making

all the fuss, and if I'm lucky then I might be able to intercept the magic projector!'

Isyuram joined the rest of the criminals.

'Damn, I didn't think that far.'

Ark scratched his head with an irritated expression. The exploration of the Suspicious Cave was successful. He gained more experience than expected and also a rare mantle. But the biggest profit was the Hearthstone. Every time he attacked an enemy, there was a chance to absorb mana using the Mana Steal Stone. Although he had more than 6000 mana, the skills he received after changing professions ate a lot of mana. In such a situation, a Hearthstone that could recover mana was a windfall. There were mana potions but they were many times more expensive than the health recovery potions. Although the probability was low, with the Vampire Stone and Mana Steal Stone then he could absorb health and mana at the same time. That alone was enough to make the 'Promised Sword' better than Gwisal's sword. Ark wanted to confirm the effectiveness of the Hearthstones right away. But he had figured out a method to create Hearthstones using the Phantom Hourglass. If he went to an area with the desired special effect then he could produce a Hearthstone. He wanted to try it when he had all four Hearthstones equipped.

'It's good, it's all good, but.....'

Ark looked at the Monkfish mushrooms that had become charcoal and sighed. In his desperate situation, Ark had used the coal dust explosion to finish off Karad. However, there was something Ark hadn't considered. There were a huge number of Monkfish mushrooms in the coal mine. But those mushrooms had been caught in the explosion and completely became charcoal. Although he hopefully dug a few out, the effect of the Monkfish mushrooms had disappeared like expected.

‘In the end I’ve only managed to obtain 60 mushrooms. Damn, if I knew this would happen then I wouldn’t have caused the explosion.’

But it was too late for regret. Still, wasn’t he quite lucky? Although Ark’s dream of obtaining a jackpot with the mushrooms was stopped, he had finished the other preparations thanks to the Suspicious Cave. He had managed to gather all the ‘Skin of the Dead’ and ‘Heart of the Dead’ from the dungeon.

‘Huhuhu, I can finally make the A class Immortality Pill!’

It was the reason that Ark had doubled Buksil’s required quota of ingredients. Once he started making the Immortality Pill, he could not use the pot until it was completed. It took him 48 hours to create the B class ‘Slime’s Immortality Pill’ so the A class pill would probably take longer. So he wanted to store as much food as possible before starting the creation period.

‘Fortunately I already have enough food for two days. Once I make food out of the ingredients that Buksil collected this time then I can start the Immortality Pill.’

So Ark’s face filled with expectation as he waited for Buksil.

“This bastard, why is he so late? Hey, what are you doing?”

Ark hit the eyeball attached to the back of his head and shouted. Then he heard a voice coming from the eye.

“Ugh, Ark-nim, please save me!”

“Bah, I knew you would commit a crime that would make me hit you. If you don’t come back within 3 minutes then.....”

“It’s not that....chaotic, chaotic users! I am being pursued by them!”

“Chaotic? Where? Where are you?”

Ark stood up and shouted.

"I've almost reached the campsite but.....ugh! There are archers among them.....ouch! Anyway, I'm desperate. Please do something. I'm still fine but Baekgu.....Hik, Baekgu!"

"Master, over there!"

Then Racard pointed to one side and yelled. When he turned around, a huge cloud of dust was approaching at a rapid pace. Buksil was riding Baekgu in the lead while 15 users riding horses were chasing after him. When he checked using Eyes of the Cat, both Buksil and Baekgu had less than 20% health left.

'What's going on? Such a large number.....'

Ark made a confused face. Then Buksil rushed towards Ark at an absurd speed and shouted.

"S-save me!"

"What the, that guy?"

"Sheesh, he had colleagues?"

"Never mind, I only see one fellow. Kill them all!"

"Heroic Strike!"

No unnecessary questions were asked! The thieves rode forward on their horses and swung their swords.

"T-this.....you keep running and withdraw to the back!"

The group had already caught up so Ark had no choice. Even if he got on Radunma and ran away, it was difficult to escape from horses. The group also had archers so it was suicide to turn around and run when they were this close. In the end, Ark grasped the situation and drew his sword.

"There's no possibility of this situation ending gently. Razak, Racard, get ready!"

Ark used Sprint to head towards Buksil's direction along with his summons. The swords came from every direction. Ark raised his arm and shouted.

"Razak, transform!"

Ttdadadak, ttadadadak!

The bones started clanging and Razak transformed into the Saw blade. At the same time, Ark grabbed one of the warrior's sword and pulled him to the ground. Then the Saw blade changed into a whip and pulled the horse, causing it to be stunned from the impact. The important thing in a fight was to attack one person while dodging the other attacks. Alternatively, he could attack and use any gaps to drink potions or use recovery magic.

"You're the first one!"

Kwa kwa kwa kwang!

Ark blocked the sword which unleashing a barrage of kicks on the warrior.

"Oh, t-that guy.....stop him. Warriors turn around, archers intercept him!"

When Ark unexpectedly caused one of the warriors to fall into a critical condition, the thieves became tense. They took a battle position and attacked Ark. The warriors lifted their shields and charged.

'Sheesh, I only had a bit more before defeating him.....'

Ark rolled on the ground to avoid the warriors' attacks. But before he could regain his posture, the arrows flew down like an evening shower. The arrow caused damage and an abnormal status. The arrows pierced through his chest, shoulders and thighs and glowed red.

-You have received a critical hit from the arrows! 250 damage. 240 damage. With the arrow lodged, your movement will be slowed for 30 seconds.

"Damn, Racard!"

"Ohhhh, Dark Dash!"

After Ark was hit by the arrows, Racard rushed to the archers. However, the archers were protected by magicians who used 'Fireball' and Racard retreated as his wing caught fire. Meanwhile, Ark pivoted on his foot to avoid more arrows and blocked the incoming attacks of the warriors. In addition, the warrior that Ark had driven into a critical condition was healed.

'As expected, is it too difficult to fight against 15 people?'

Ark clenched his teeth as he lost a lot of health in a short time. They were between level 250-300. After hunting the Mould Zombies in the cave and collecting the materials, Ark reached level 366. When his dark attribute bonus was added, it came to level 549. That was more than 200 levels difference. However, there were 15 opponents. While he could defeat 20 monsters, the 15 users had a variety of skills. In addition, they were a band of thieves so PVP was their specialty. Their combat standard couldn't be compared to that of monsters. Of course, he had defeated numerous users in Seutandal but even then it was 1 against 2~3. He also had a lot of supporters to reduce the enemy. However the only person fighting now was Ark. Buksil and Baekgu had their health depleted so they couldn't help. No, Buksil and Baekgu would just be a hindrance even if they did fight.

'No, Racard also can't help.'

In the bandit group, there were archers and magicians. If it was monsters then Taunt could be used to scatter them but Taunt didn't work on users. If Racard approached again then the long range attacks would hit him.

'Damn, why did Buksil bring these guys.....?'

He had no business with that group. If he had 20~30 people with him then defeating those 15 was possible. But the 15 people had a combination of professions so it was unreasonable to expect Ark to beat them.

‘I have to try and take advantage of the terrain features.’

Ark dodged the arrows without any breaks and swung his sword when there was a chance. Ark knew that the swamp was around here. The poisonous swamp and rotting trees made it a densely packed place. Those guys wouldn’t be able to ride their horses there.

‘The problem is escaping their encirclement.’

The thieves had surrounded Ark and Buksil and took turns attacking them. Whenever Ark made a move to penetrate the siege, the thieves just moved back and maintained the encirclement. They were good at fighting in a group.

‘But there is a way!’

“Racard, Blood Lane!”

At that moment, Racard’s eyes turned red and a huge amount of blood gushed out of his mouth, hitting the archers and magicians. It flowed up and covered a range of 10 metres like a rain shower. The descent of the cursed blood caused a large number of abnormal states! But the thieves had surrounded a large area so half of them weren’t affected.

‘But that is enough!’

“Eh? W-what is this?”

“My body is moving on its own. Confusion!”

“Damn, it is curse magic. Curse Cure!”

The eight thieves that had been affected by the blood wandered around in a confused and dazed state. The priests swiftly chanted a spell and released the curse but the formation had already become disordered.

"Ooooooh, b.....blood....b....."

"Go home and eat. Racard summon released! Buksil, Baekgu, run!"

Ark sent Racard who was vomiting blood back and ran forward. Although two warriors hurriedly tried to stop him, there was no possibility of stopping Ark with the battle formation collapsed.

"Adol!"

Ark combined 'Jump' and 'Dark Blade,' flying forward like an arrow and slamming into the warriors. The warriors received a devastating impact and fell to the ground. Meanwhile Buksil and Baekgu had broken through the encirclement and entered the swamp. Baekgu had only been with them for a month but had already adapted. He used 'Jump' to reach the swamp and lost the thieves.

"Damn, that guy got away!"

"Eh, what is this? It's a swamp?"

The thieves became confused as they came across the swamp. They were different from Baekgu who could use Jump and couldn't move properly for fear of falling into the swamp.

"Okay. Buksil, you escape through the swamp for the moment."

"Huh? What about Ark-nim?"

"I have something left to do."

Ark turned his body and grinned. While the thieves got off their horses and regrouped, Ark wandered around and attracted the Mould Zombies.

".....I won't let it go!"

"That guy has been caught by the zombies!"

"Catch that guy! The pig was hiding behind him before!"

“Damn, if only there wasn’t this swamp.....”

“Arrows. Turn him into a hedgehog with arrows!”

The thieves gathered and instantly shot a barrage of arrows. However, Ark was immersed in using Dark Dance and reducing the health of the Mould Zombies. When Ark concentrated on his footwork, a message window appeared.

-Dark Dance has reached 70% completion and Dark Scale is activated.

<The dark armour will decrease your evasion by 20% but will increase your defense by 30%, and there is an increased 10% of reflecting the enemy’s attack. In addition, any dark magic will be invalidated if the damage is less than 100>

When the percentage of completion for Dark Dance became higher than 70%, Dark Scale was automatically triggered! It consumed 500 mana but the effect was worth it. The 200~300 damage fell down to 120~180. His defense had increased by 30% but the actual damage reduction was 40%. It was because an additional damage was applied when the enemy’s damage was less than his defense. In addition, several arrows were reflected back to the archers. Thanks to that, the attack speed of the archers fell.

‘As expected, the 2nd profession skill is different.’

While Ark had decreased four Mould Zombies down to a critical condition, the thieves were running towards him after navigating the swamp.

“Oh, they’ve come just as I’ve finished the preparations. Riposte!”

Ark hit the Mould Zombies that had less than 2% health left with Riposte. Then the Mould Zombies flew towards the bandit group and exploded, releasing a white powder. It was the ‘Mould Spore Scattering’ that the Mould Zombies used when they died. The warriors who were affected by the spores for the first time wore a stupid expression.

“W-where did he go?”

“Eh? When did you get here? Take this!”

The warriors looked around restlessly and started to hit each other. They were affected by the ‘hallucinations’ of the white spores and saw their colleagues as Ark.

“Is this another curse magic? Curse Cure!”

The priests chanted a spell but the magic couldn’t break the spore’s effect.

“What are you doing? Wake up, you stupid people!”

After hearing their colleague’s voice, the warriors stopped attacking and stepped back. Nevertheless, they were under the effect of ‘hallucinations’ and couldn’t distinguish between Ark and his colleagues. The warriors couldn’t attack each other and started to confirm their colleague’s voices. But that was just the beginning.

“Hmm, the white mould has the weakest effect? Aren’t they lucky? But how long will their luck last? Now, let’s continue. Riposte, Riposte, Riposte!”

Ark gathered the Mould Zombies and shouted before blowing them away. It was a Mould Zombie bomb! The Mould Zombies’ bodies reached a critical point before exploding and scattering various spores. The white spores caused ‘hallucinations’ while the green mould caused ‘numbness.’ Then the worse mould spores appeared. It was the red spores which turned those affected into zombies! Three or four thieves were affected and their bodies started rapidly decaying.

“Damn, what the hell is this? Retreat, retreat!”

The thieves couldn’t withstand the Mould Zombie bombs and hurriedly withdrew. Then Ark’s eyes brightened and he attacked someone who was trying to run away. It was the reason why Ark bothered to fight the

thieves. If he used the Mould Zombies then he could wipe out the group. But there was a reason he wanted to confront those guys.

‘Chaotic!’

It was because there were users with red names among the group. It was a bandit group so it would be strange if none of them were chaotic. But although they were a bandit group, some of them weren’t chaotic and only had a grey name. Only chaotic users could inflict the last blow safely. So it was common for chaotic users to be mixed in the group while the person in charge of PK would deal the last blow. If a bandit group had 100 people then only 10 of them would be chaotic. However, this group of thieves were a bit strange. The higher level a chaotic user was, the more severe the penalty. So it was common for the chaotic players to have the lowest level in the group. But in this bandit group, the leader Jepeteu was a chaotic user.

‘I’m very thankful.’

It wasn’t necessary to say it again, but there was a 10% chance of equipment dropping when hunting chaotic players. In other words, chaotic users were like a walking loot for him. These were the highest levelled PKers he had come across. Even if the least valuable item dropped, he would still be able to get at least a magic or rare item! Ark caught one person with the Saw blade where the others became confused.

“Heok, J-Jepeteu hyung-nim!”

“Jepeteu, I’m sorry but you’ll have to die.”

“What, what the? This bastard.....!”

Jepeteu’s face turned red and he swung his sword. But away from his colleagues, Jepeteu was just level 300. He was moderately strong when fighting with his group but had no chance in a 1 on 1 fight. In addition, he was still affected by the ‘numbness’ caused by the green mould. Ark continuously used his sword and kicks. Within 1 minute, Jepeteu had

his face shoved into the swamp. There was a ringing sound and his helmet fell down.

‘Huhuhu, I got one item!’

Ark laughed and picked up the item. Then he heard cries from outside the swamp.

“Over there!”

‘Huk, what, what the? How many are there?’

Ark turned around and his face hardened. A huge number of users were raising a dusty cloud as they came from the other side. Yes, they were the subordinates of Jepeteu who Ark had defeated. There were dozens of them!

‘Are these the subordinates in his party? They have dozens of people so wouldn’t some of them be PKers? Anyway, it’ll be annoying if they come to the swamp. I can’t get any more items.’

“Radun, transform to Radunma!”

Ssak ssak, ssak ssak ssak ssak!

Radun transformed into the huge lizard and Ark jumped on. On flat ground, Radun could run at the same rate as a horse. But this place was different. The swamp was poisonous. It would be difficult to ride a horse properly. But Radun was a snake so he wasn’t affected by the swamp. Ark was willing to face the thieves in the swamp because he knew he could escape anytime.

“Let’s go Radun!”

Pa pa pa pa, pa pa pa pa!

Radun moved his short legs and ran across the swamp.

Act 6: Marine Chase

“Phew, they are persistent bastards.”

Sand fell from his head as he shook it. The thieves who he met in the swamp were so persistent that it was scary. Usually chaotic users would only chase for a maximum of 1 hour but these guys stuck to him like leeches. The 70 people separated and searched so it wasn't easy to escape them.

‘In addition, their chasing abilities are just as good as JusticeMan and the rehabilitation brothers.’

He also didn't know how 70 of them managed to be gathered. It had been 1 year since New World opened and most people had formed groups by now. Many guilds were made from the beginning and a lot of users stayed with the people they met in the early days. These days, the recent trend in New World was to form groups or clubs instead of guilds. In the case of such groups or clubs, they didn't have the organizational skills of a guild.

‘If this was a survival game then there would clearly be a military club’

This gathering showed a strong organizational ability. The military club was those that would enjoy playing mock combat survival games in the mountains. In addition, their physical bodies were comparable with their level and combat abilities. With these characteristics, the thieves ran after Ark tightly.

“That's because it is Ark-nim.”

Buksil also dropped down onto the sand and whined.

“If you just ran away then they wouldn't have followed you. But you killed their leader and grabbed an item so now they want to pursue you no matter what.”

“Weren't you the ones you brought them?”

Anyway, it was a bit annoying but there was an unexpected benefit.”

-Burikand’s Combat Helmet (Rare)

Armour type: Shell Helmet

Defense: 80

Durability: 90/90

Weight: 60

User restriction: Level 200

The combat helmet of Burikand, the leader of a mercenary group. In the past, Burikand was a mercenary who defeated a legendary monster and made a helmet from its shell. Thanks to its attribute, it tolerates magic. If it suffers damage then the durability will gradually recover over time.

Option: Magic Resistance +10%, Strength +20, Stamina +10.

Special Option: Even if durability is damaged, it will automatically recover.

This was the helmet that Jepeteu had dropped. In fact, Ark didn’t have huge expectations when he picked up the helmet. A chaotic player had a 100% chance of dropping an item when they died. So it was common sense that chaotic users would wear trivial equipment. But the reason that Ark had taken the risk to kill Jepeteu was because he expected the leader of the bandit group to wear a magic item.

‘Yet he dropped a rare item!’

Rare items were incredibly good but scarce items. It was enough compensation for risking his life. Thanks to Radun and Baekgu carrying them, they managed to arrive at Haman Fortress before the group caught him.

‘Huhuhu, now I can say goodbye to those guys.’

Of course, most of them were normal users except for Jepeteu. There were no restrictions on entering the city but they couldn't follow him to Haman Fortress. Although they couldn't attack inside the city, the 70 people could watch the entrance and wait for an opportunity.

'But I have no more business in Seutandal.'

That's right. Ark had finished all his business in Seutandal. He had found all his pets and also changed to his 2nd profession. He might as well leave Seutandal and return to the continent. Then the 70 thieves in the vicinity couldn't act.

"Come, let's cross to the continent before those guys bother us."

"Are we returning to Schudenberg Kingdom?"

"No, this time the destination is the magic kingdom of Bristania."

Ark laughed at Buksil's question and replied. Ark chose Bristania as his next destination because of the quest item he received. It was the Lord of Darkness Valderas' Insignia which gave him the <Find the Fire Draconian's Home> quest. He had completed 3~4 quests during that time and this was the only one remaining.

'The quest is restricted to level 120 so the reward might not be that great....'

Yet he didn't like the idea of giving up a quest reward. A low level quest given from a quest starting item might give him a special item. Who knew what kind of compensation he would get or if it would lead him to a new quest?

"Anyway, I've explored almost all of Schudenberg and Seutandal now. Even without a quest, it would be good to explore a new area. Although I can accept quests from the same area, Bristania would give more difficult quests to users from different kingdoms."

Ark already felt anticipation at the thought of a new kingdom and quests. Then Buksil asked with a worried look.

“Don’t tell me we’re going to ride the dolphins?”

“Why?”

“Why? Seutandal is 4 hours away from Schudenberg but it will take 7 hours to reach Bristania. Riding a dolphin for that long would throw out my lower back! Ark-nim can ride the dolphins. And I will ride the ferry with Baekgu.”

“Who will take the dolphin? I’ll ride the regular ferry.”

“Huh? Why?”

Buksil’s eyes widened at Ark’s reply. The ferry to Bristania was more expensive than the Schudenberg one and cost 18 gold! However, Ark who feared wasting even one gold was expectedly riding the ferry. But Ark couldn’t help it this time. The sea route between Seutandal and Bristania was quite rough. The last time he visited the vampire estates, he received motion sickness. What would happen if he rode the dolphin on waves that were several metres high? In addition, Ark had never been to Bristania. Without geographic information about Bristania, it was likely that he would wander off to some ridiculous place.

‘Well, that isn’t the only reason.....’

“Anyway, we’re going on the ferry. There’s still some time before the ferry will arrive so I’m going to make some preparations. You have some time so go visit a few places.”

“Yes. Let’s go Baekgu.”

Buksil headed to the shopping district with Baekgu. Buksil’s bag was basically bursting with japtem. He hadn’t visited Haman Fortress since they headed for Oberium from the vampire territory. So it was packed with the decorations he took from Racard’s castle, the cursed items from Oberium, the various miscellaneous items he received from hunting the Mould Zombies and the various food ingredients. Except for the curse items and food ingredients, he needed to sell the other items in order to clear some bag space. While Buksil was conducting business, Ark

headed to Haman Fortress. It had been one and a half month since he visited Haman. The fortress had changed unimaginably and was still changing. Ark aimed for the trading post he completed shortly before leaving. But in contrast to the remarkable development of the fortress, the atmosphere was a little messy.

“The pirates have been attacking merchant ships so the atmosphere is a bit rough. A merchant fleet was attacked last time and there were a large number of casualties.”

Beseutyu spoke in a concerned voice. These days the pirates were the topic of conversation between most NPCs in Seutandal. When considering Seutandal’s previous rate of development, it should’ve grown more. But because the cargo ships had been attacks, there was a shortage of construction materials so work had slowed.

“It’s not easy to find the lawless port.”

“Are there a lot of users coming and going?”

In fact, Ark hadn’t thought that the lawless port problem was that serious. If general users as well as the Hermes guild and Nakujuk were using it then information must be leaking somewhere. Wouldn’t someone with a loose mouth write it on a notice board or something?

“I thought like that as well. But the guys managing the lawless port..... They’re probably from Hermes but they are very strict about the users who can enter the illegal port. If they suspect the person can’t maintain confidentiality then they wouldn’t be allowed in. Well, only chaotic users are allowed in there so the chaotic players are being careful.”

“Those Hermes members are very determined.”

“Yes, so we decided to go after them ourselves.”

The problem had become so serious that Isabel had invest a huge amount of money to build a battleship. If Seutandal possessed a combat ship than the pirates won’t be able to run wild. So the leaders of the autonomous group, JusticeMan, the rehabilitation members and Lariette

were busy training the Baran clan in sea battles. Beseutyu said that even now they were training offshore.

“By the way, if you go to the continent then when will you come back?”

“Well, I’m not sure yet. But it won’t take long.”

“I’ll be waiting.”

After exiting the information centre, Ark had wanted to visit the training camp but shook his head.

“JusticeMan ajusshi and the rehabilitation brothers are busy so they won’t have time to meet me. In addition, it is a little troublesome meeting Lariette-nim after what happened before. If they created a battleship just for the pirate problem then there is no reason for me to go.”

So Ark went searching for Isabel. If he offended her then he wouldn’t receive any more compensation. He also wanted to hear news about Shambala. Currently Shambala was on a mission to rally the residents of Eastern Nation. If Shambala completed the Eastern Nation rallying mission then Shambala would receive the Saint Assassin’s 2nd profession.

‘But why does it feel like his task is easier than mine? Plus.....’

Isabel’s face flushed every time she met Shambala which meant that Shambala’s work was painless.

‘It is a good thing but I don’t know if I should celebrate.’

Ark frankly still couldn’t understand how Shambala could feel a romantic love for a NPC. It didn’t matter how real the NPC seemed. Furthermore, New World wasn’t a girl entertainment simulation game..... Why would NPCs in the game flirt? He didn’t know what she wanted.

‘Well, it’s not my life to be concerned about.’

Ark didn't have the energy to care about things unrelated to him. He even avoided Roco and Lariette since he didn't know how to deal with the problem..... Anyway, he finished his business in Haman when the eyeball attached to him shouted.

"Ark-nim, hurry. The ship has arrived!"

When he hurriedly ran to the docks, the ferry to Bristania was making preparations to depart. It was ahead of schedule so Ark barely made it in time thanks to the eyeball.

"Wow, look at that!"

The gazes were focused on Ark's group after they boarded the ship. Although some users recognized Ark, the users' eyes were focused on Baekgu.

"Look at that glossy hair."

"Isn't the size also considerable?"

"Is his owner a merchant? Where did he get a pet like that?"

While users could select the Wolf Clan when creating their characters, Baekgu was a Wolrang and looked quite different. The silver fur made Baekgu look quite beautiful compared to other dogs. The owner of the dog attracted the envy of other users. Baekgu pricked his ears and listened to the words of the surrounding users as he ascended the boat behind Baekgu. Baekgu gathered strength into his neck and tilted it with a proud look.

'If the Wolrang clan could see this then they would cry.'

The Wolrang who lived and died with honour would've been offended to be considered a pet, but Baekgu was already a pet dog.

'Well, this turned out well.'

Anyway, the captain made a speech after Ark boarded the ship.

“Thank you for using this ferry. This is the regular ferry between Seutandal and Bristania. It might take a lot of time compared to travelling to other kingdoms, but just relax and we’ll make this as comfortable as your own home. We are now departing. All sailors to their locations!”

The sails opened and the ferry started moving.

“I’m finally leaving Seutandal. I’ll see you again Seutandal!”

Ark gazed at the gradually receding Seutandal with a look filled with deep emotion.

‘There’s no doubt about it. He got on the ship just then!’

There was a person spying on Ark from the corner of a building near the port. His hood was pushed back and revealed Sunfish who had the X scar on his cheek. Sunfish was a member of Jepeteu’s organization. After tracking Ark’s movements, they learned that his last destination had been Haman Fortress. So Jepeteu made Sunfish sneak into Haman beforehand in order to follow Ark.

‘They took the Bristania ferry. Huhuhu, did you think it was possible to escape from us just by taking the ferry? You stupid fool. We won’t let you escape from Seutandal.’

Sunfish pushed down his hood and took out the Feather of Whispering. At that same time, someone else at the port was also acting similarly to Sunfish.

‘I’ve found him! He’s on Seutandal as expected. But now that guy is screwed!’

A vague smile spread on the man’s mouth.

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The ferry parted the water and flowed forward. It was already summer so the cool foam of the water felt refreshing. Once the ferry set sail, the users immediately took out their fishing rods.

‘It is regretful but.....’

Ark clicked his tongue as he looked at the people fishing. When he headed towards Seutandal from Schudenberg, he had made a profit cooking and selling dishes to the people fishing. He would’ve liked to engage in that business again. But Ark shook his head. When heading to Seutandal, it had been mainly warriors on the ferry. But there was a higher ratio of merchants when returning to the continent. The warriors headed towards Seutandal to hunt but the merchant’s purpose was trade. They bought things from the continent to Seutandal to sell and then would sell goods purchased from Seutandal on the continent. So there was a ratio of 70% merchants when leaving. And a lot of merchants had learned to cook. While the effects and taste of Ark’s survival cooking was superior, merchants were apprehensive to eat food they couldn’t make. So it was unreasonable to expect them to pay him a fee to cook.

‘Besides, I have no time to earn some petty cash.’

Ark laughed and entered the cabin. Then he pulled out the pot and arranged his ingredients. There were 200 bunches of 20 ingredients. It was the Skin of the Dead and the Heart of the Dead. That’s right. This was why Ark bothered to use the ferry.

‘It takes 7 hours to reach Bristania so it is impossible to play earnestly.

The sea route took a minimum of 7 hours. That was different from the previous 4 hours. Other users would leave their unit on while conducting other business. Thus most users would engage in other business while leaving the unit on. So he thought about making the Necromancer’s Immortality Pill.

‘The Immortality Pill takes a lot of time to create. It doesn’t matter after reaching the maturation process, but the mixing and crystallization

process requires watching. Anyway, I can't do anything on the ferry so I might as well start the process. By the time we reach Bristania, it will be in the maturation stage and I'll leave it in the vault at the Magic Institute.'

There was also a desire to finish it as quickly as possible because he had been waiting for so long.

'I can finally make the rank A immortality pill!'

Ark swallowed his saliva and put the ingredients into the pot. When the Necromancer's Essence was dropped in, it instantly melted and changed to a dark glue like liquid. Next the Skin and Heart of the Dead was added, the dark liquid turned to a black soot and a message window appeared.

-You have gathered all the necessary ingredients to create 'Necromancer's Immortality Pill.'

Now it is time to start the process of creating the immortality pill.

Immortality Pill Mixing = Crystallization= Maturation. Once it goes through these 3 stages then it is complete.

Estimated required time is 96 hours.

-You have entered the stage 1 mixing process.

The ingredients in the Necromancer's Immortality Pill have magical qualities that are contrary to each other. If there is a slightest mistake in mixing then all the efforts so far would be wasted. Special attention is required to ensure that all ingredients are mixed correctly until the process is finished.

<Once the brilliance of the liquid becomes a little muddy, you have to shake the pot and mix the ingredients together. The abilities of the immortality pill can vary by how well it is mixed.>

=Time remaining in Mixing process: 3 hours.

'96 hours.....!'

Ark's mouth dropped after reading the information window. Didn't that mean it would take 4 days?

'But I just have to finish the mixing and crystallization process and the rest is just waiting. It only took 8 hours to create the Slime's Immortality Pill. Although the A rank pill takes longer, if I start it now than I can finish the crystallization process by the time we arrived. As expected, it is good that I took the ferry.'

After looking at the information window, he realized he wouldn't waste any time. Compared to the time it took to collect the ingredients, 4 days wasn't a problem. When considering the bonus an A class immortality pill would give, who cared about a little boredom?

"Now let's get started."

Ark stretched his joints and grabbed the pot.

"I have to ensure the best degree of completion! Nothing can go wrong."

Ark shook the pot at an absurd speed. Kwa kwa kwa kwang, kwa kwa kwa kwang! Suddenly there was an audible roaring from far away and the hull tilted to one side.

"Ugh, what, what the? I almost ruined it!"

Ark looked at the pot with a stricken face. Not all the immortality pills were the same. The added bonus depended on the degree of completion in each process. That's why he hunted 20,000 Mould Zombies and found enough ingredients to create two Necromancer's Immortality pills. If it spilled over the side then the percentage of completion would fall!

"What is going on? Didn't they promise to make this as peaceful as my house?"

Ark murmured with irritation. Dangtangtang. When the sound was heard, Buksil opened his door and shouted.

“Ark-nim, it is serious!”

“I know. They almost made my spill it!”

“No, that’s not it..... It’s the pirates, pirates!”

--

Kwa kwa kwa kwang! Kwa kwa kwa kwang!

After running onto the deck, the roaring sound was instantly heard again. At the place where the roaring sound was heard was a ship with a black hull and skeleton flag rapidly approaching

“Emergency, emergency! A pirate ship is approaching closely!”

When the pirate ship appeared, the sailors ran around the deck making noises.

“Oh my god! Why are the pirates attacking a passenger ship?”

The captain muttered with a pale, stricken face. Typically the pirates only targeted merchants. There was no point engaging a passenger ship in sea battle when there wouldn’t be much profit. There was the method of attacking the users directly but it wouldn’t be easy and a variety of scrolls would have to be used. In addition, Seutandal couldn’t produce that many supplies for trade yet so the merchants aboard the ferry often had empty bags.

On the other hand, the merchants’ fleets had a lot of economic power and rich merchants. It was to the extent that they couldn’t hold it in their bags and had to leave it in a warehouse. If they sank a merchant fleet then 20-50% of the warehouse items would float in the sea. So the pirates were more likely to attack the merchant fleets arriving at Seutandal.

‘Damn, pirates? No way!’

Ark shook the pot and frowned. He really had no luck. He was saying it again but there was only a 1~2% chance of pirates attacking a ferry. So

why was he among the 1~2%? In addition, if he died then he would lose all the ingredients he gathered with difficulty.

‘My degree of completion can’t fail because of pirates or I’ll go crazy!’

Kwa kwa kwa kwang, kwa kwa kwa kwang!

Once again projectiles flew from the pirate ship. However, it still wasn’t enough to reach the ship and the bombs exploded in the water. “Port to maximum height! We’re screwed once we’re in the range of the ships!” The ferry rotated heavily at the captain’s command.

However, this was a peaceful ship created for carrying passengers so the pirate ship was superior in speed and turning capability. The pirate ship moved in a slanted line and fired warning shots again, making the ferry shake.

‘Hik, pot, my pot!’

Ark clenched the rail firmly and shook the pot. Then he suddenly heard a familiar voice.

“Kuahahaha. It’s better to stop the flimsy resistance!”

‘Eh? This voice is.....?’

Ark flinched as he saw the person yelling from the pirate ship. He surprisingly knew the face of the captain of the pirate ship. It was the boss of the bandit group that Ark had killed in the swamp, Jepeteu! Jepeteu had a subordinate magician use ‘Voice Amplification’ magic and shouted.

“If you surrender then I won’t sink your ship. We only want one person. If you cooperate and surrender then we’ll only look for that person!”

‘What, what the? They really chased me to here?’

Ark was surprised and hid himself behind the railing. Then Buksil glared angrily at Ark and declared sharply.

"Look, they chased us all the way here because you took their helmet!"

"The person we want is a dwarf merchant who looks like a pig!"

"Eek? Me? Me? H-how come?"

Buksil screamed and hid behind the railing as Jepeteu continued. Ark was also puzzled. Ark thought the bandit group was chasing them because he killed Jepeteu and snatched his rare helmet. But he hadn't done anything and Jepeteu was looking for Buksil? Why?

"Did you do something to those guys?"

"I don't know. I just kept running away!"

Buksil replied with a perplexed expression. However, this was not the time to be thinking about that. The passengers who were panicked by the warning shots became disturbed by Jepeteu's words.

"What the? They're chasing after someone?"

"Then they'll leave us alone if they find the person they're looking for?"

The passengers muttered with a hopeful expression.

'Shit, if this continues then won't the passengers drag us to them?'

Ark hid under the rail and continued shaking the pot while shouting.

"Don't be fooled! That is the modus operandi of these guys!"

"What? Fooled?"

"Do you think they would shoot a ferry just to get one person? Once they board the ship, they'll just rob everyone's bags. Obviously they had a lot of [Robbery] scrolls."

"I see. That's right, that person is right!"

"That pirate is a weak bastard!"

By the end of Ark's words, the passengers were glaring at Jepeteu. Then the captain grabbed a loudspeaker and shouted.

"Do you think I will surrender to pirates who are trash of the sea? Even if your words are true, this ship is owned by the King of Bristania. There is no way I will pass a passenger of the King's to pirates! I will uphold the honour of Bristania and resist until the end!"

"Bah, I can't communicate with them. It can't be helped. Approach them!"

When Jepeteu laughed and raised his hands, the sails of the pirate ship instantly unrolled. Then the pirate ship accelerated and approached the ferry.

"Port side! Starboard!"

The captain shouted but it wasn't easy to ferry to escape the quick hull of the pirate ship. After a short time, the pirate ship finally managed to line up beside the ferry. The strongest weapon of the pirates was the cannons. And cannons were mounted on the side of the pirate ship. That was why the pirate ship moved in a slanted line and approached from the side. That was the best attack range of a pirate ship! Once lined up side by side, the cannons could fire dozens of artillery. If an ordinary ferry was attacked by dozens of cannons fired from close range then it would sink.

"S-stop them. Prevent them from bombarding us!"

The captain shouted frantically.

Then archers and magicians on-board the ferry attacked the pirate ship. But the range of the bombardment was from dozens of metres away. Most of the arrows and magic fell into the ocean, and the attacks that reached barely damaged the hull.

"Hahaha, you fools! Do you think attacks that shabby would damage this battlefield?"

"Damn, port side! Port side! We have to escape from their range!"

"Not a chance. You think that slow ship can escape us?"

No matter what direction the ferry moved to, the pirates quickly overtook them. Meanwhile, the dozens of cannons on the side of the pirate ship were loaded.

'Damn, what do I do?'

Ark tightened his lips and felt like his insides were burning. If the artillery hit the ferry then it would suffer extravagant damage and sink. But the problem was not the damage. If Ark died now then his immortality pill creation would be cancelled. All the ingredients in the pot would be lost. But Ark couldn't think of a method.

'There is a method to escape. Fortunately it is just one pirate ship. Before the bombardment starts, I have to jump into the ocean with Jepeteu knowing.'

Even if the ferry didn't sink, most users wouldn't have a way to survive if they fell into the ocean. However, Ark had the 'Flute of the Merpeople' and could call the dolphins. If he called the dolphins before escaping into the ocean then he could escape Jepeteu. But he was also taking a risk. Right now Ark was concentrating his energies in shaking the pot!

'Riding the dolphin and completing the immortality pill at the same time will be difficult.'

Ark was thinking that when something interrupted him. One of the soldiers on the mast shouted with a shocked voice.

"Captain-nim!"

"What?"

"P-pirate ship!"

"Are you joking? Why are you talking about a pirate ship that we've already seen?"

"No, that's not it..... A different pirate ship has appeared from the left. And there are three of them..... It is a pirate fleet! They're approaching at a rapid pace!"

"W-what?"

The captain ran to the left deck with huge eyes. Just like the sailor said, three pirate ships were approaching. While everyone was distracted by the pirates on the right, a pirate fleet had appeared on the other side. The three pirate ships were on a completely bigger scale than Jepeteu's pirate ship.

"This is a ferry! A ferry! Why are four pirate ships attacking us?"

The captain muttered with a devastated look. Then a voice that was using 'Amplification' magic was heard from the pirate fleet.

"Hohoho, we've caught him!"

"Listen up, don't bother with the weak fellows! We only want Ark who is riding that boat! We'll only leave after we take him out!"

Ark focused his gaze as soon as his name was mentioned. The person yelling on the flagship of the pirate fleet was a woman wearing silver chain armour and a big burly man wearing leather armour. Even though he turned over every corner of his brain, Ark couldn't remember those faces. Buksil looked at Ark and asked.

"This time they're definitely looking for Ark-nim. What did you do?"

"Damn, I don't know. I don't know those faces!"

"People you don't know are chasing after you and threatening you with a pirate fleet?"

"How should I know what those guys are thinking?"

Ark and Buksil were busy arguing. Then the woman wearing the magician's clothes hit the man on the back of the head and said.

"You idiot, do you think he will come up obediently? Just sink them for the moment!"

"What? But....."

"We're positive he is present. Even if he sinks, he'll just revive at Haman Fortress. Then we can just wait there."

"Ah, that's right. That means sense. Pirate fleet! Head to that boring ferry!"

The three pirate ships over took the left side of the ferry. Thanks to that, the ordinary ferry was sandwiched between pirate ships.

'What is this? Doesn't this mean I can't escape on the dolphin?'

The pirate ships were lined up on the right and left side. Although Jepeteu's reason was unknown, he definitely wouldn't leave it alone if he saw Ark getting away on the dolphins. If Ark was too obvious when running away then the cannons of all four ships would point to him. Riding a dolphin while shaking his pot and avoiding cannons was impossible.

'W-w-what can I do? I'm trapped like a prey about to be eaten.'

Just the thought of it was enough to make him sag.

'I can't die like this. But both sides are blocked.....'

No matter how hard he tried, he couldn't think of a way to escape the pirates. Then he heard the captain's completely panicked voice.

"Ugh, no. This is the end. Should I have accepted their request? Maybe they really are just aiming for the dwarf merchant and that Ark fellow."

'What? He can't have that thought.....!'

"Captain, that's not possible at all. Just like Captain said, doesn't the King of Bristania have a responsibility to ensure the safety of all the passengers?"

While Ark was frowning, a sailor spoke with an unaccepting expression. The sailor was a person who with a righteous character. The captain sighed and nodded at the sailor's words.

"Uh, you're right. I was so scared that I forgot about my obligation. A true sea man is someone who handles himself in a moment of crisis. I have to follow that motto."

"Yes, Captain. We'll act like that as well."

The captain and sailors had completely forgotten about their previous thoughts. Ark was saved thanks to that.

'Lucky those guys stopped. That danger has disappeared.'

Ark was thinking when someone suddenly shouted.

"Hey, look at that. Another ship has appeared!"

"What? A pirate ship again?"

"No. That flag is Seutandal! It is Seutandal's combat ship!"

'Seutandal's combat ship?'

Ark raised his head and looked over the railing. 2 combat ships were approaching at a fast speed from behind. The symbol of the Eastern Nation which was already representing Seutandal was drawn on the flag fluttering at the top mast.

"Hahaha, they're pirates. We've finally caught up to them!"

A heroic voice was heard from Seutandal's combat ship. These days, using 'Amplification' magic during naval battles seemed to be the trend.

'Isn't this voice JusticeMan ajusshi?'

That's right. The people on the combat ship weren't just JusticeMan. Standing next to him were the rehabilitation group and Lariette. A look

of relief appeared on Ark's face. But it turned gloomy again after a few seconds.

'Seutandal's combat ship..... It was completed? However, it is too late. The pirate ships have already surrounded the ferry. It will be sunk before the combat ship can help. Is there some way to delay the time until the ship arrives?'

Ark pulled his hair and looked at the pirate ships on both sides. Jepeteu's pirate ship was 50 metres away and preparing for bombardment! There were as many as 30 cannon muzzles protruding from the doors! Just one round of firing would be enough to sink the ferry. But the even more menacing thing was the pirate fleet approaching on the other side. The three ships contained a total of 90 cannons aimed at the ferry! If the cannons were fired simultaneously then the ferry would disintegrate into powder. There would be no way for Ark to survive in the midst of the explosions.

'Then I have no choice but to suffer? No, wait? The pirate fleet only arrived a short while ago, but Jepeteu had already prepared his bombardment a while back so why hadn't he attacked yet?

Perhaps.....ah, that's it. There might be a way to survive.'

Ark suddenly remembered something and headed towards the bridge.

"It was an honour to sail with you."

"Huk, Captain!"

The captain and crew were embracing each other with teary eyes when Ark arrived. They were surrounded by four pirate ships so it was natural to give up hope. However, Ark had no intention of sinking into the sea with them.

"Captain, there is a way to penetrate the siege!"

"What?"

The Captain hurriedly wiped his tears and turned around. Ark told the Captain his thoughts. The Captain's face changed often while listening but he eventually nodded.

"Yes..... There is that method..... Maybe..... No, there is no other way. I understand. Gather all magicians from the sailors and passengers to one place! They'll be given orders depending on the reaction of the pirates."

"I understand."

While the Captain gathered the magicians and explained the plan, Ark climbed to the roof of the bridge. Still shaking the pot with one hand, Ark amplified his voice using 'Intimidation' and shouted.

"Hey you bastards!"

Act 7: Beast Master

"Huhuhu, who knew my dream of being a pirate would come true?"

Jepeteu looked at the pirate ship with a satisfied look. Jepeteu had invested a huge amount of money into remodelling a combat ship into a pirate ship. He named the pirate ship 'Pinocchio' and it had 30 of the latest state of the art cannons attached. In addition, it contained comfortable cabins that could hold up to 200 Nakujuk that he hired at the lawless port! It had a special coating which increased defense against long range attacks and luxury sails which increased speed by 30%. The remodelling cost 8000 gold! It was an investment for the organization to advance in New World. It was laughable that a ferry would try to escape the state of the art combat ship. Jepeteu already had experience as a pirate so he controlled the pirate ship well and caught up with the ferry. It happened the moment he was about to sink the boat. An unidentified pirate ship appeared on the other side.

"What's with them? Don't they understand the ethics of business?"

Jepeteu looked at the eye catching pirate fleet with irritation.

“Hey, Sunfish. Send a signal.”

Sunfish received the order and climbed up the mast, waving a flag.

【This ship is already ours. Please leave. 】

They were commonly used signals between lawless pirates. Even the lawless pirates had their own rules. The purpose of the Hermes Alliance when creating the illegal port was to retake Seutandal. They were all lawless pirates so there was no point attacking each other. The number one rule was that pirates who attacked a target first had the priority. However, the pirate fleet on the other side had ignored that rule.

【Shut up, this ship is ours. Retreat or receive a beating. 】

‘T-those bastards! They know who I am yet they still dare.....!’

Jepeteu frowned at the answer he received. Jepeteu, who was he? Although he was in hiding because he was a wanted criminal, he was the middle boss of an organization with 300 members. He wanted to run over there immediately and beat them to death. But this was a game and there were three ships. While they didn’t have the latest up to date model like Pinocchio, The hull itself was bigger and they had three times as many cannons. If they attacked then there was a 100 in 100 chance of Jepeteu losing. That was the reason why Jepeteu hadn’t attacked even though his cannons were armed. In addition, the combat ship of Seutandal had just appeared. However, there was no probability of Jepeteu withdrawing.

‘There is no way I will leave the ferry to those guys. If the pirates take the ferry then retrieving the magic projector from the pig will be even more difficult. It is the same if the pig flees onto Seutandal’s combat ship.’

So Jepeteu just stood there and didn’t do a thing. Then a voice that had been amplified was heard.

"Hey you bastards!"

'H-he is the one who killed me in the swamp.....!'

"Let's see. That person over there, did you come chasing me because I killed you in the swamp? What? Did you chase me this entire distance just to whine? And you're pulling such a shabby pirate ship around? You're really playing shabbily. Are you a loser in real life? No, instead of a pirate or thief, aren't you just a neighbourhood thug who extorts money?"

"What? A loser? A thug?"

Sparks flew from Jepeteu's eyes as he glared. But then Ark turned his back and addressed the other side.

"And where did you guys come from? Why are you shouting will pulling three small boats? I'm sick of all the losers coming here. No matter what you do I won't blink an eye. Go ahead and use your trivial cannons." You l-o-s-e-r."

Jepeteu made a furious noise at Ark's last words. On the opposite side, there was also the sound of someone losing control.

"That cheeky bastard dared insult the organization..... I don't need to see anything else..... Shoot! Turn him into powder!"

"W-wait a minute!"

Then someone rushed over and hurriedly shouted. The person who came running towards Jepeteu was Isyuram.

"Are you with that guy and the pig?"

Isyuram had been listening to the speeches from the deck and jumped out with surprise. Isyuram had been with the members of the organization when they arrived at the swamp after Ark fled. He never imagined that the pig who recorded Jepeteu's dealings and Ark were

related. He only confirmed that the user who helped the pig and defeated Jepeteu was Ark after Ark appeared on the bridge.

‘I don’t know what happened but if Ark is with the pig then finding the memory crystal won’t work. But it’ll be difficult if Ark and the pig die here! I have to help them escape somehow!’

He hurriedly spoke to prevent Jepeteu from giving the command.

“Isn’t our purpose to snatch something from them? If they sink then they’ll just die. Maybe we should watch the situation a bit more.....”

“Heh, it does not matter. Didn’t you hear what those guys on the other side were saying just then? If those fellows die then they will resurrect at Haman Fortress. We can just wait at the resurrection place. As soon as those fellows arrive, we use the scrolls to strip them naked.

If we use the scrolls on the pig then we can snatch the magic projector.”

“But the pirates on the opposite side.....”

“We caught the ferry first. They went against the rules of the lawless port. In addition, the Seutandal combat ship is heading towards that side. We have to smash the ferry before that ship arrives.”

“B-but.....”

“Shut up. Attack, attack!”

Kwa kwa kwa kwang, kwa kwa kwa kwang!

Pinocchio’s cannons shot out 30 fire bombs at once. That wasn’t all. The pirates on the other side had also fallen for Ark’s provocation and aimed 90 shells. That was a total of 120 cannons being fired! It was only a matter of time before the ferry became destroyed.

“Continue to unleash it until that impertinent fellow is turned to powder!”

‘Damn, this is serious!’

Isyuram inwardly screamed and followed the shells with his eyes.

“Now!”

Then Ark’s voice was heard loud and clearly. At that moment, an amazing thing happened. 10 magicians were gathered on the deck and used magic. One side used fire magic while the opposite side used ice magic! The two types of magic flew into the sky and collided, causing an intense explosion. Fire and ice, when two attributes with opposite natures collided then a massive gust of wind occurred. The gust was so strong that the crew on the deck was pushed back. At the same time, the intense gust hit the mast and accelerated the ferry forward several metres like a turbo car.

“W-what is going on?”

Jepeteu stumbled with tears in his eyes. Who would have imagined that the sailboat would be able to accelerate quickly using the power of the wind? However, Jepeteu wasn’t looking at the ferry. In the empty space where the ferry previously was, black circular object were flying forward. Yes, it was the 90 shells shot by the pirates on the opposite side.

“E-evade! Evade them!”

Pepepepeng, pepepepeng, pepepeng!

Before Jepeteu could finish talking, Pinocchio had been directly hit by 90 shells.

“Hyung-nim, all the masts are broken!”

“The rudder isn’t working!”

“There are dozens of holes in the deck and water is leaking!”

“U-unbelievable..... My Pinocchio.....the boat that I poured 8000 gold into renovating.....!”

Jepeteu’s eyes widened as the reports from his men came pouring in. It was understandable if it was a ferry. But a battleship was incapable of

falling that easily. It was common to be hit by shells in a general naval battle. That's why Jepeteu's ship and the pirate fleet thought it was okay to stay near each other. They also weren't anxious because of the cannons. But with the ferry gone, Pinocchio and the pirate fleet were bombarding each other at close range. When receiving a bombardment of this degree from such close range, it was dangerous even for an expensive combat ship. In addition, there were three ships in the fleet so Pinocchio's bombardment didn't do as much damage. However, Pinocchio received the concentrated attack of three ships and shattered. Pinocchio fell into an unrecoverable state which was enough to make Jepeteu paralyzed.

"Ugh, they dared do this to my Pinocchio! Shoot, shoot! Show those other pirates!"

However, there were already only 10 cannons remaining on Pinocchio. The pirate fleet was also baffled by the unexpected situation. Meanwhile, Pinocchio was again bombarded as the 90 shells automatically fired. The Pinocchio which had 8000 gold invested in it sank into the sea along with Jepeteu.

"Aaaaaack, no, my Pinocchio!"

'Well, at least Jepeteu didn't get his hands on the memory crystal.....'

Isyuram looked at Ark as Jepeteu's cry rang out.

'Am I going to die because of that guy again? I am like a bowl of rice to Ark in New World.'

Isyuram's eyes stung. It wasn't just because seawater had entered his eyes.

"Awesome, a genius. You're a genius!"

The captain shouted towards Ark. It wasn't necessary to say but Ark was the one who devised the plan to move the ship using the collision of

fire and ice magic. Ark couldn't use actual wind magic because when wind magic was used, it became as sharp as a knife. If the magic was used directly then the sails would be cut up. So the only method was to indirectly create wind from the collision of ice and fire magic.

"We can't be relieved yet. The black pirate ship had sunk but the pirate fleet received no special damage. We have to avoid that pirate fleet until Seutandal's combat ship arrives."

"T-that's right. Now what do we do?"

"Fortunately, most of the crew on the pirate fleet are Nakujuk. The Nakujuk don't have any magicians so they can't use that method to avoid the shells."

Ark said when a message suddenly appeared in front of him.

-JusticeMan has used the Feather of Whispering to request a whisper.

JusticeMan had confirmed that Ark was on the bridge and sent him a whisper. When Ark accepted the request, JusticeMan's voice was instantly heard.

-Ark, is this Ark?

-JusticeMan ajusshi!

-Why are you on that ship?

-It will take too long to explain the circumstances. Anyway, I've avoided the danger for the moment but the situation isn't good.

-I see. But your idea was accomplished very well.

-Well, this much is needed if I want to live.

Even in such circumstances, Ark didn't forget to shake the pot.

-But it will help the ferry hold on until we can reach it to rescue you. I'll lead the combat ship in the 3 o'clock direction so you move there too. You're slightly

ahead of them so if you stay to the right then you should be able to join us without major damage.

Just like JusticeMan said, thanks to the acceleration the ferry was slightly ahead of the pirate fleet. JusticeMan's plan was to bypass the pirate fleet and join up with the combat ship which also had cannons. However, they were travelling at a 3-5 degree angle while the other ship had 30 cannons. While it was intimidating to the ferry, it wasn't impossible if they could accelerate using magic.

-Once you join us, we'll cover the ferry as it sails back to Seutandal. Then we will follow soon after.

-Huh? Why? The pirate fleet received a little bit of damage. I think two battleships should be able to face them..... And Seutandal can also call for support from the troops in nearby waters. Surely you can take care of those pirates?

-No, our purpose isn't to clean up the pirates.

-What is your purpose then?

-We want to use this chance to determine the location of the lawless port which they use as a home base.

JusticeMan explained the situation. While JusticeMan had been running around looking for the location of the lawless port, he had discovered a clue to the location. The lawless port couldn't be entered using a land route. In other words, it was a marine fortress with a boat required to enter. Isabelle had committed huge funds to the battle fleet for this reason. But the pirates were aware of this and cleverly hid the location, which meant JusticeMan hadn't found it yet. While in the middle of ocean surveillance, they had captured the movement of the pirate fleet.

-Our fleet is on standby in the nearby vicinity. If they fight here and then leave, the pirate fleet will have to return to the lawless port for repairs. Then we'll follow using a high speed boat and can find the location of the lawless port. So you have to run away first.

-I understand what you're saying.

Ark disconnected the communication and instantly ordered the captain.

"To the right. Circle to the right to bypass the pirate fleet and join the combat ship."

"But if we circle to the right then we'll be within the range of the pirate fleet."

"That is the quickest method to join the combat ship. If we accelerate using magic then we won't receive a lot of damage. And once the distance is narrowed then we'll be supported by the combat ship."

"Support? Then you communicated with the combat ship just then?"

"Yes."

Ark nodded while the captain stared at him blankly.

"With your foresight just now, are you also the captain of a combat ship? Who are you?"

"Just a passenger."

Ark rocked the pot and replied. Anyway, the ferry circled in the direction that Ark indicated and entered the range of the pirate fleet.

"Not yet. The magicians have to conserve their mana. We need the magicians to raise the gust of wind to move the ship twice, so we need to coincide the timing with the shells to minimize the damage."

Ark paid attention to the movements of the pirate fleet and said. Then a huge explosion occurred on the pirate ship in the lead. It was an explosion of fire and ice magic! The pirate ship flew forward like an arrow towards the ferry.

'What, what the? Isn't that the magic we used? But that ship's crew was almost all Nakujuk.....heok, don't tell me that woman alone.....?'

Ark's mouth dropped open as he confirmed the pirate ship rushing towards him. He saw that the female magician from a while ago had fire and ice magic rushing from both hands towards the sky where it exploded. She had accomplished by herself what it took ten magicians on the ferry to do. In addition, the gust that occurred was more powerful than the one created by 10 magicians.

"What the, who the hell is that woman? How.....no, why did they rush forward? Rushing in that way....heok! Perhaps.....accelerate, Captain accelerate the ship!"

Ark was astonished and suddenly shouted. But before the magicians could chant a spell, the pirate ship had already ran into the side of the ferry.

Kwa kwa kwa kwang!

The ferry shook and the passengers and Ark on the deck slid to one side.

"Ack, pot, pot, pot!"

"I-I lived!"

Ark stared at the black liquid in the pot with a pale white face. When the whole boat shook, Ark rocked the pot and barely caught it using Dark Dance. All he cared about was the A rank Necromancer's immortality pill!

'But what is with these reckless guys?'

Ark stared with astonishment at the pirate ship stuck in the side of the ferry. The pirate ship had crashed into the side so it also wasn't okay. The players aboard were also disordered. Even if they lived, the pirate ship would require huge repairs. Yet the ship had collided without any hesitation. This wasn't the act of someone with their sanity intact.

'Who are the warrior and magician from earlier? Why would they do such a thing.....?'

“Hehehe, kill everybody!”

Then the pirates shrieked and boarded the ship. The ferry became a mess as the pirates boarded. The Nakujuk pirates who boarded were a bit stronger than before and were between level 250-300. Of course, the passengers aboard the ferry also reached that level. However, 70% of the passengers were merchants. While the warriors and magicians held on, the merchants couldn't resist and collapsed.

‘Anyway, isn't this situation unusual?’

“Take this!”

Two pirates were rushing towards Ark. He quickly avoided their attacks and took out Lancel's sword. He had to shake the pot with one hand so he couldn't use the two handed Gwisal's sword. He was anxious as he had to fight while shaking the pot on a rocky boat. However, Ark maintained his balance using extraordinary movement and cut the Nakujuk. After the taekwondo training against the Mould Zombies, his overall sense of balance had improved beyond ordinary people.

‘The Nakujuk aren't the biggest problem.....’

Ark used Riposte on the Nakujuk and looked at the distant sea.

Kwa kwa kwa kwang, kwa kwa kwa kwang!

Seutandal's combat ship was engaging the other two pirate ships. It was a complicated fleet battle where the bombardment never stopped! He could clearly see that JusticeMan was being slightly pushed back by the two pirate ships. However, this was within JusticeMan's calculation of the situation. While it looked like JusticeMan's ship was receiving most of the attacks, he used his manoeuvrability to target the rear of the pirate ships. When the pirate fleet returned to the lawless port, they would be more easily tracked. Anyway, the intention of the attack was to aim for the weak point. But it was still a 2 against 2 naval battle so they couldn't afford to come help the ferry. As a result, even if they managed to disconnect the pirate ship from the ferry then the ferry wouldn't be able to escape it.

‘I can’t expect help from JusticeMan ajusshi.’

Unfortunately, there was no way to save the passengers of the ferry. But that result might even be better for Ark.

‘The two pirate ships have been caught by the combat ship. And the other pirate ship has collided with the ferry. I can run away without a pirate ship stopping me!’

The reason Ark hadn’t called the dolphins was because he couldn’t escape without being fired on. But now all the pirate ships that would’ve stopped him were caught. He needed to escape while the pirates were distracted by the sailors and passengers. Ark quickly determined his course of action and shouted.

“Buksil, where are you?”

“O-over here!”

Buksil’s voice was audible from above him. How did he get up there? Buksil was unexpectedly clinging onto the top mast. Anyway, he managed to escape by climbing up.

“You idiot, what are you doing there?”

“But the pirates....heok!”

“Heheh, die!”

Buksil screamed as two pirates climbed up. Then Baekgu jumped up the mast and bit the Nakujuk’s neck, tearing the flesh and dropping them.

‘I don’t need to worry about Buksil while Baekgu is there.’

“Buksil, Baekgu, plunge into the sea when I give the signal!”

Ark said and quickly took out the Flute of the Merpeople. Just as he was trying to blow it, a tremendous energy surged in front of him. Ark felt a cold feeling and instinctively moved his body.

Kwa kwa kwa kwang!

A huge bayonet smashed into the deck, causing it to explode. The destructive power was like a bomb had gone off! The fragments of wood flew into the air and fell like a shower about the burly physique of the man standing there. It was the player who had said Ark's name. From afar, he had looked like a larger than normal person but it was a lot different seeing him up close. This man's muscular body was twice the size of ordinary people and the leather armour he wore made him seem like a beast.....he was like a brute.

"I finally met you Ark."

The brute laughed and looked at Ark.

"You avoided my attack just then so don't you have moderately good reflexes?"

"Who are you?"

"Me? Oh, I haven't introduced myself. My name is Bread."

Yes, the big, burly warrior was Bread. Together with the magician, he was a user who had a grudge against Ark. After visiting Silvana and receiving Raiden's full support, they had returned to Seutandal. With Raiden's support, he offered them some pirate ships from the lawless port and intelligence from his spies in Haman Fortress. One of the two men spying on Ark at the harbour was from Hermes' intelligence network. The news reached Bread and Redian who were waiting at the lawless port. The two of them rallied the pirate fleet and chased after the ferry.

"I am not interested in your name. Why the hell are you chasing after me?"

"You don't know me but I've been looking for you for a while."

"Looking for me?"

"The explanation is a little complicated....."

Bread scratched his head and laughed.

"Why don't you just let me relieve my stress on your body and die?"

"Are you joking?"

"So you're not going to die? Frankly, I like that it's not boring. You're the one who raised Seutandal? Just like Raiden said, your original look isn't a black wolf."

"Raiden? What? Are you from the Hermes guild?"

"No. Well, we did receive a bit of help from Hermes to look for you but they are unrelated to our reason to kill you. Anyway, do you have the same capabilities as the wolf who raised Seutandal? It'll be boring if you die too easily."

Bread smiled and asked with a strange expression.

"By the way, I've been interested for a while but why are you shaking that pot?"

"It's not your concern. I can shake the pot or even catch the pot while dancing."

".....I don't know why you're doing it, but wouldn't it be better to put it down? Or you'll regret it."

"Shall we see? If I will regret it. You might be the one leaving with regrets."

Ark continued shaking the pot while smiling. Then Bread laughed and said.

"You're full of self-confidence. Why don't you show me your skills?"

Bread shot forward like a knife and swung his bayonet. Ark moved his body reflexively and the bayonet struck the ground. Just like before, the deck exploded. It was enormous damage!

‘This guy.....!’

He had a sense of how dangerous the attack was just by being in the proximity. Ark stayed away from Bread and checked his information using Eyes of the Cat. Bread’s profession was a Beast Master. It was a class he never heard of before. Well, he assumed that there were hundreds of professions in New World..... It was Bread’s level that made Ark amazed.

‘Huk, what, what the? Level 402?’

Although he was immersed in the game while lacking sleep, Ark was only level 366. But he was already over level 400? Was that guy even sleeping while playing the game? He hesitated after discovering Bread was over level 400 but it wasn’t enough to make him despair. In fact, Ark was more worried about the pirates boarding the ferry than Bread. If the pirates controlled the ferry then it would be difficult for him to escape.

‘I have to defeat him quickly and get out of here!’

“Radun, turn on the Dark Lamp!”

Ssak ssak ssak, ssak ssak ssak ssak!

Radun quickly vomited out some magic ingredients and lit the lamp. The lamp vibrated and the surrounding area turned dark. At the same time, the 50% dark attribute bonus was applied and Ark reached level 548. Even if that person was level 400, it was possible with Ark’s dark attribute bonus.

“Okay, if you want a fight so badly. Dark Blade!”

Ark ran to Bread and used Dark Blade. Bread hurriedly raised his bayonet and defended himself. However, Bread's face was still relaxed as he laughed.

"Hmm, you're level seems to be quite close to mine, no. Did you stats grow after using the lamp? It seems like you receive a dark attribute bonus? I did think that your battle scene was a bit different in the day and night when watching the video."

Bread had abundant experience and figured out the Dark Lamp and his attribute fairly quickly.

"Although it is a bit disappointing, you seem moderately proficient. But the skills and items you use are fairly interesting. This is a game. Okay, if you appear like this then I'll accept it without reservations. 'Beast Spirit Possession!' Strength of the Bear rise!"

'Is it a bear like power? Is he a space sheriff?'

Ark laughed at the ridiculous gesture. Then the form of a huge bear appeared around Bread and he almost cried. As soon as the shape was absorbed in Bread's body, he really was covered in brown fur like a bear.

'Eh? What the? Transformation?'

Bread jumped forward with a huge momentum and swung his bayonet. Ark instinctively ducked at the last moment. The air parted from the bayonet's tremendous momentum. And a mast was cut with one blow.

"T-this is.....!"

"Hey, it's just starting. It will be difficult if you're already surprised."

Bread smiled and swung the bayonet again.

"Dark Dance!"

Ark used complicated footwork to avoid the bayonet. It cut the mast with one blow. A strength which transcended imagination. However, there was a limit to how much stat points received when levelling up. If

he had that much power than his other stats would be low. A warrior who increased strength and stamina would have low agility, so Ark thought to use Dark Dance to draw him into a high speed battle. However, Bread already knew what Ark was thinking.

“Eh? This time it is a speed battle? It’s no good, ‘Beast Spirit Possession,’ power of the Cheetah rise!”

This time the form of a cheetah appeared around Bread. Just like when Ark used Jump, the cheetah was absorbed into Bread and his thighs became two times thicker. Then he rushed forward at an absurd speed and brandished the bayonet.

Kwa kwang!

“Ugh!”

The violent impact pushed Ark back 10 metres. Dark Dance had reached 70% completion so his defense automatically increased by 30% thanks to Dark Scale, but he still lost 800 health. If Dark Scale wasn’t triggered then it would’ve been 1000 health. However, Ark had no time to scream at the damage.

‘Damn, this is really dangerous. I almost ruined it!’ In this situation, it is okay to shake the pot for the mixing process but I will fail if it reaches the crystallization process.’

Ark sighed with relief as he caught the pot and shook it. After shaking it so many times, the slight muddy colour had gone away and it was becoming glossy.

‘But what is with this monster like guy? What on earth is that strange skill?’

Ark avoided the following attack with Sprint and used Skill Penetration.

-Bread’s profession skill: Beast Spirit Possession

Beast Spirit Possession is the profession-specific skill of the special class

Beast Master. When Spirit Possession is used, it is possible to contract the soul of animals to elevate certain stats. A Beast Master can contract a maximum of three souls at the same time.

* Current Beast Spirit Possessions:

【Bear】 The bear's soul can amplify power by 50%.

【Cheetah】 When choosing the soul of a cheetah, it is possible to increase agility and reaction rate by 50%.

'Spirit Possession? What kind of cheat skill is this? In addition, it is possible to contract up to three spirits? Then couldn't this guy become even stronger?'

In fact, Ark had no right to say that. In Bread's case, he could only increase three stats at the same time but the limit was only by 50%. But in Ark's case, his dark attribute bonus would increase all stats by 50%. Ark also had some cheat like qualities. However, Ark had never encountered a user who received similar stat bonuses as him. It was similar to Alan's overlapping three buffs and Shambala's dark attribute bonus.

'Wait? Does he also have a hidden profession?'

But now wasn't the time for such thoughts. Bread was far higher levelled than Ark and his skill was no joke. Even if he used all his power to fight, there was no guarantee of success. On the other hand, Ark had to shake the pot while fighting. In addition, he was using the level 50 Lancel's sword instead of his primary two-handed Gwisal's sword. But that wasn't all. All the pirates were running wild in the vicinity.

'If I don't defeat him immediately then it will be difficult. If I defeat this guy then the situation will be resolved. It is best to press him back and somehow escape.'

But I have to increase my stats before I push him back.....is it time to use that?'

“Glory of the Night!”

Ark was forced into a corner and pulled out his trump card. It was the area declaration skill of his 2nd profession! Glory of the Night required 2000 mana. It was an enormous skill which even consumed 400 Spiritual Power. Once he used it, he had to give up summoning his pets. In return, his defense and damage increased by 50% while his magic resistance increased by 20% for 10 minutes. Although he hadn't realized it at the time, Shiva's Proclamation which the Red Man previously used was also an area declaration skill. He had thought it was a ridiculous skill at the time, but he learned that anyone could learn it after changing to a 2nd profession. And just like Shiva's Proclamation, Glory of the Night showed an enormous effect. When Glory of the Night was used, the dark space widened. It was a summoning of the spirits of the night! At the same time, a message window appeared in front of Ark.

-Glory of the Night has been used.

<When within a 100 metre radius, your attack and defense will increase by 50% and magic resistance by 20%>

The extra 50% was added to his dark attribute bonus and his damage ascended! A 100% bonus was added to his basic attack.

“Now, let's see if you can keep laughing!”

Ark brandished his sword and ran towards Bread. Bread retreated with a slightly surprised expression and murmured.

“Eh? This guy has also changed to his 2nd profession?”

‘What? This guy too? Then.....?’

Ark flinched as Bread slammed his bayonet vertically into the ground and shouted.

“Land of the Beast!”

Then a coloured totem rose in front of Bread. A light continuously spread in front of the totem and turned the ground into a blue grass. It was an area declaration skill! But the more surprisingly thing occurred when the blue grass collided with the dark space. When contact was made, the totems sparked and broke at the same time.

-The Area Declaration skill has encountered another one and disappeared!

Ark exclaimed with astonishment and Bread just laughed. "What, what the?"

"How much time has passed since you've changed professions? This is how to stop the Area Declaration skill."

"Area Declaration? As expected, you...."

"What is it so startling? Did you think you were the only person with a 2nd profession?"

He thought he was the only one. Now he had invested 2000 mana and 400 spiritual power only to have the Area Declaration skill vainly disappear..... It was a really good skill which was why it had a weakness. In the end, was it impossible to use that skill when fighting against users with a 2nd profession?

'Damn, then I can't use Area Declaration against the Red Man....'

He felt furious thinking about that. Well, it would have an effect when fighting monsters.

"Now I'll demonstrate my power properly. Beast Spirit Possession, power of the Hawk rise!"

Bread really was a space sheriff. After being empowered with the spirit of the bear and cheetah, his agility, strength and reaction rate had increased. Now the spirit of the hawk increased his critical hit probability and he rushed at Ark. On the other hand, Ark's area proclamation skill had failed and he couldn't summon his pets.

“You’re still not putting down the pot? Are you trying to imply something?”

Ark was still shaking the pot even in this situation so Bread murmured in a nasty voice.

‘Damn, I would do it if I could but I can’t throw away the pot!’

“If you don’t exert your skills then I don’t have any more business with you!”

Ark barely avoided the critical hit and retreated. Then the eyeball attacked to the back of his head screamed.

“Ark-nim! Behind, behind, behind!”

Ark listened to the eyeball and hurriedly turned away. An immense fireball was heading towards him. It was flying from the female magician wearing white chain mail called Redian.

‘That’s right, didn’t this guy also have a magician? Didn’t she just move the pirate ship by herself so how does she have enough mana? I’m screwed. Even if I somehow defeat Bread, there is no way I can escape that magician! No, I can’t even stop Bread’s attack while avoiding the fire magic!’

Ark groaned. However, Bread’s bayonet changed course and impacted with the fireball.

‘Eh? What’s with this guy?’

“What are you doing?”

Bread cut the fireball in half and shouted towards Redian. Then Redian frowned and shouted back.

“What am I doing? Isn’t that obvious? I was going to fry that guy.”

“Stop!”

“What?”

“You don’t understand? I am dealing with this guy. Although it is funny that he is shaking the pot, this guy’s skills are real.”

“Don’t make me laugh, I also have a grudge against that guy.”

Redian snorted and chanted a spell again. Then Bread looked serious and muttered in a low voice.

“I.....will really get angry.”

Redian flinched and looked at Bread. After a short time, the ball of magic deflated and Redian muttered.

“Sheesh, you stupid bear. Okay, but make sure you definitely deal with him. And then I’m next. You understand?”

“Yes, I understand. You’re as charming as always.”

Redian blushed and turned her head. Bread looked at her with a charmed expression before she turned around again.

“I’m sorry. Anyway, now no one will disrupt the fight. Don’t worry about the pirates either. She’ll stop any pirate that tries to interfere with a warrior’s battle. So why don’t you put down the put and fight seriously.”

Ark stared blankly at Bread. He didn’t know what type of grudge they had but Bread was different from the people he encountered so far. He admitted to Ark’s skill and wanted to fight warrior against warrior to the death. He even declined his colleague’s help. For there to be such a person.....

‘An idiot, he is an idiot!’

Yes, Bread really was stupid. Then Ark could use this.

‘Hehehe, a warrior’s battle.’ I have no intention of talking foolishly like that guy. Don’t make me laugh. Didn’t he also crash into the ship to

chase him? Who knows how the situation will change? In addition, don't I also have to compete with that magician when Redian finishes? Then the pirates? In the end, nothing will change even if I win. Are you crazy? Why would I do such a thing? In addition, shaking the pot? Damn, I'm risking my life to shake this pot!

However, Ark murmured with a deliberately impressed look.

"You're a real warrior!"

"No, well, you don't have to go that far....."

Bread scratched his head with an awkward expression.

"No, I've never met a true warrior in New World. Okay, if you're that resolute then I will oblige and fight you warrior to warrior. But I'll apologize first. I'm ashamed to be fighting a warrior like you while holding the pot. I understand. Now I'll face you with all my power."

"Oh, really?"

"Definitely. But can you give me a few minutes? A man against man match. I need time to prepare and to pack the pot again, and this place is also in the middle of the ocean. So let's turn our backs and walk ten steps like in a western movie before attacking."

"Ah? R-really? Well, if that's the case....."

Bread nodded and turned his back to Ark with no hesitation. Then he took a deep breath and his shoulders moved up and down. Bread really was admirable. He had decided on a man against man fight. Then he coolly turned his back to the enemy..... This guy is sincere! That's what he thought. However, Ark had a wicked smile on his face as he turned around.

'An idiot, he really is stupid!'

In fact, Ark had blown the Flute of the Merpeople as soon as he turned around. After Bread walked a few steps, he turned back around and exploded a sword.

“Blade Tempest!”

It was the Blade Tempest which activated with a dark property! The fragments with a black aura around it swirled around Bread.

“Eh? What the? Cancel power of the Hawk. Beast Spirit Possession, defense of the turtle!”

Bread flinched and used Beast Spirit Possession, with his skin changing into the shell of a turtle. It was a Beast Spirit Possession which increased defense. Although the turtle skin was able to prevent some of Blade Tempest’s attack, it was limited. Some of the shrapnel managed to penetrate Bread and caused enormous damage. After the storm subsided, Bread jumped and shouted.

“Y-you! What are you doing?”

“Hahaha, did you think I would fight an ignorant bastard like you? Goodbye!”

Ark’s voice came from below the ship. Bread hurriedly ran to the railing and saw a large number of dolphins gathered. Ark was riding one of the dolphins and shouted to the deck.

“Now! All passengers jump down and ride any of the dolphins!”

“Eh? What’s with the dolphins?”

“The person who commanded the ferry a while ago. He called them!”

“Oh, it’s an opportunity, run!”

The users and sailors who had been cornered by the pirates jumped into the sea. When the sailors and passengers grabbed them, the dolphins caused a tremendous splash and scattered. Ark had urgently called a herd of dolphins for this reason.

‘This isn’t my style.....’

In fact, Ark had originally planned to get away by himself. However, the pirate fleet had appeared so now he reluctantly needed the passenger’s help. If so many people escaped then they wouldn’t be able to find one person. Just like the event quest in Jackson where JusticeMan led other users or using NPCs in the siege, Ark was willing to use players or NPCs to achieve his goal.

‘If one person escapes alone then it isn’t possible but there is a way if everyone escapes together. And it will also benefit me if everyone escapes too!’

“You cowardly bastard.....!”

“Bah, you should’ve listened to me you idiot! Hellfire!”

Redian cursed and aimed the magic towards the back of Ark who was escaping. The tremendously powerful magic tore through Ark’s back and he died straight away. But the next moment. Ark who was hit by magic scattered like smoke.

“No way.....illusion?”

“Over there! He fled to the other side!”

Bread discovered Ark who was escaping among the passengers.

“Cancel shield of the turtle. Beast Spirit Possession, power of the dolphin rise!”

Bread used the spirit of the dolphin and quickly caught up with Ark before attacking. However, this Ark also scattered like smoke and disappeared.

“What the? Another illusion? If that’s the case.....?”

“There is! He’s escaping there!”

Redian shouted after discovering Ark who was gradually getting further away from the ship. Then she chanted a spell before cancelling it.

“Incorrect, he had already escaped my range.”

“This, unbelievable...! I’ve never seen such a cowardly person! He dared insult the principles of a duel....I can’t forgive him! I can never forgive him Redian. I’ll chase after him. Jump down!”

Redian held on to Bread and they chased after him at enormous speed.

‘Huhuhu, those stupid bastards.’

The original Ark looked up from the sea bottom and laughed. That’s right. The Arks who had disappeared like smoke was the Moonlight Illusion. While Redian and Bread attacked two and chased after the final one, Ark had hid on the ocean floor.

‘This is the benefit of sharing the escape with other users.’

Ark had called the dolphins for other users to help himself. It was in order to hide his illusions among the other users. If there were only 3 illusions of Ark floating in the huge ocean then they would see through it. So Ark called dozens of dolphins and mixed the illusions among the survivors. Bread and Redian’s reaction was delayed because of that. In the meantime, Ark had bitten the Mermaid Scale and waited on the ocean floor.

‘Huhuhu, it’s good that the liquid in the pot isn’t affected by water. By the water, I had completely forgotten about Buksil.’

Ark clicked his tongue and murmured. He had been so preoccupied that he had no time to worry about Buksil. Fortunately, Buksil and Baekgu were also riding the dolphins but Ark couldn’t track them. In order to deceive Bread, Ark had ordered the dolphins to scatter and head to Bristania. Therefore, Ark had no way of figuring out which way the dolphins went. Although Ark tried to talk to the eyeball attached to him, the distance between the main body was too far for communication.

‘Well, I’ll just contact Buksil later and arrange a meeting place.’

Ark carefully looked at the outside situation from underwater. Just as planned, JusticeMan had pretended to retreat. The battle ended like that so the other ships towed the pirate ship attached to the ferry. Although Ark couldn’t confirm it, he expected that the rehabilitation group was following the pirates.

“The situation has been sorted. So, shall I go?”

Ark called the dolphins and rode across the sea. Even with all that, Ark’s left hand was still shaking the pot.

Act 8: National Police Agency Quest

-The auction is in progress. Wind Spirit’s Boots: 6,200,000 won

-The auction is in progress. Burikand’s Combat Helmet: 6,700,000 won

Hyun-woo couldn’t hide his disappointment after reading the messages on his computer. When he picked up Burikand’s Combat Helmet, the price had gone beyond what he expected. Although Burikand’s Combat Helmet was a level 200 rare equipment, the option wasn’t that good. Although rare items have special skills attached to them, the defense wasn’t that special. From a warrior’s perspective, they would rather have magic items with additional defense. It was because it was a rare item that the item reached 6.7 million won after 4 days. Hyun-woo was disappointed by the Wind Spirit’s Boots. In fact, Hyun-woo had hesitated over whether to change to Wolf’s Feet. His mind had wanted to continue using the Wind Spirit’s Boots. While Wolf’s Feet had a little more defense and the ‘Jump’ skill wasn’t bad, Ark thought that ‘Slide’ had more usefulness. The problem was that Wolf’s Feet was a part of the <Animal King> set. If he gave up Wolf’s Feet then not only would his defense decrease but the set item effect would decrease.”Huh?”

“No matter how much I like it, I can’t use that equipment. Unfortunately, he had no choice but to abandon the Wind Spirit’s Boots. It isn’t necessary to carry around shoes I can’t use.”

In the end, Hyun-woo decided to sell the Wind Spirit’s Boots. But when the auction was in progress, the value fell below Ark’s expectation. Although he changed equipment, his hesitance made him hold onto it for one month. But when he placed it on the auction site at the same time as Burikand’s Combat Helmet, the auction price was less than the helmet by 500,000 won. In addition, only seven people had bid during three days.

“The number of bids doesn’t mean that there is less interest. If many people who were interested waited until the end of the auction then the price would rise less. At this rate, the highest bid will be 8 million won.”

A sigh flowed from Hyun-woo’s mouth. If an item was put on the auction site, the highest bid could be approximately guessed after 2 days. While selling the castle to Raiden, he had received the Wind Spirit’s Boots instead of 2000 gold. While calculating the price, he realised that it wouldn’t match Ark’s standards. He thought the value would reach at least 1500 gold. But only 8 million won? That was only half of his expected price? Of course, there was a reason for it.

“It’s because I saw Duke use the Wind Spirit’s Boots in the Evil Silrion that I wanted it. If I had just read the information and not seen Duke use it then I never would’ve accepted it instead of the 2000 gold.

That was the problem. The special option ‘Slide’ was what boosted the value of the Wind Spirit’s Boots! When Slide was used, someone could deal with a number of monsters at the same time. But the power of that item couldn’t be realized just by reading the explanation.

<Special option: You can use the skill ‘Slide.’

When using slide, the player can move to their desired location without moving their body. The body does not move which means attack speed, attack power and defense does not receive a penalty. However, the

movement speed is the same and no more than 30 metres can be exceeded.

Mana consumption: 10>

“That’s the problem. If they knew how essential Slide was then the thieves and archers would swarm like ants. That such an item will be sold for 8 million won..... Ugh, my, my stomach.....” That was the explanation of the skill attached to the Wind Spirit’s Boots. Just by seeing this information, there weren’t many people who could imagine the way that Ark and Duke utilized it for battle. Therefore people couldn’t understand the value of the Wind Spirit’s Boots.

Hyun-woo grabbed his stomach and broke into a cold sweat. Hyun-woo would risk his life for a thousand won. But the thought of receiving only 7~8 million won for the item caused a pain in his stomach. He felt it wasn’t right. He really broke into a cold sweat at the thought.

“Ohhhh, I really can’t stand it. For an item world 15 million won to be sold for 8 million won..... But I can’t cancel the auction while it is still progressing..... Ouch. My stomach hurts. I really may die of bitterness.....”

Hyun-woo looked at the Wind Spirit’s Boots with tears in his eyes.

“Something..... Is there another way? Even if I can increase it to 10 million won.....”

Hyun-woo clutched his stomach and thought desperately. Should he borrow the ID of the rehabilitation members and try to increase the market price? But that was a naive thought as it would only work if someone desperately wanted to buy the item. If the item wasn’t popular then the ID of a rehabilitation member would probably win the bid. In the end, the important thing was to capture the attention of the people and let them know the value of the boots.

“But how.....”

A thought suddenly sparked in Hyun-woo's head.

"Wait, why didn't I think of that before? Didn't I want the Wind Spirit's Boots because I saw Duke using it? Then I should show a scene of how I use it to other people."

Hyun-woo finally had an idea and frantically hit at the keyboard and moved the mouse.

"I've found it!"

Hyun-woo had located the video titled 'Netherworld Expedition of a Wicked Wolf' on the internet. Hyun-woo downloaded the video and used an easy program to edit it. After editing the video down to 5 minutes, he attached the file to the auction page of the Wind Spirit's Boots.

"Huhuhu, shall I have a look at it?"

Hyun-woo smiled and clicked on the attached file. Then the edited activities of Ark appeared on the screen. The video showed the scene where Ark who had changed into a black wolf was fighting against the Nakujuk.

"Die intruder!"

A few Nakujuk ran up to Ark and swung their swords. Then Ark abruptly slid like the ground had turned to ice and counterattacked. Although another Nakujuk clan ran up to him from the side, Ark once again slid on the ground and avoided the attacks. He was evading using 'Slide.' It wasn't only that. Ark moved using 'Slide' and also used flying kicks. When Slide was combined with spin kicks, the same techniques like that in a street fighter game could be used.

'Well, that looks good enough for now.'

It was the footage collected from the 'Netherworld Expedition of a Wicked Wolf' where Slide played an active role. Even though Hyun-

woo was the protagonist of the video, he still found it fascinating to watch. So Hyun-woo edited 5 minutes of footage and added subtitles.

-The movement technique that the black wolf used in this video is the option skill attached to Wind Spirit's Boots. It is the idea chance to wear the same footwear as the protagonist! Don't miss this chance.

In fact, the popularity of that video had far surpassed Hyun-woo's imagination. Before it aired on the video, the video had gained the most hits in the shortest amount of time but he barely felt his celebrity status. Before long, the station was bombarded with enquiries about the black wolf. They even called him asking if he could attend as a guest. Since Hyun-woo didn't want his face to be known for several reasons, he declined but the black wolf quickly became a celebrity in New World. Was there a reason for him not to use his fame?

"The utilization method is shown so I hope it improves a little more....."

Hyun-woo switched off the computer and changed into training clothes. Although he couldn't go to the NPA gym anymore, Hyun-woo never missed his dawn exercise. When exercising, not only strength but also his concentration and improvisation would improve. Concentration and improvisation was quite useful in New World. Although it wasn't felt that much during normal situations, it increased his reaction rate in moments of crisis. For example, he was able to avoid Bread's attack a while ago because those senses had developed. After realizing that he had been neglecting his exercise, Ark trained for a while against the Mould Zombies. In the future, he couldn't neglect his body.

When the level increased, the character would become stronger. But just because the character was strong didn't mean the game would become easy. In his level increased then he had to hunt in increasingly dangerous places. From there unimaginable monsters with tremendous power existed! Rather, the game became more difficult as the level increased.

'Also, if level increases then I will encounter stronger users. Just like the Red Man, Bread or Redian who I encountered a while ago. Although I

couldn't show my capabilities properly thanks to shaking the pot and using a one handed sword....I'm not confident I could win even when fighting properly. Especially if Redian ended up helping. Instead of levels or skills, I should increase my basic training.'

It was important in a regular battlefield! Even when an old warrior was living a daily life, they never forgot to train in their mind. That also applied to the game! In his daily life, Hyun-woo was always playing the game in his head.

'Although my body is moving around in New World, my actual body is just sitting inside the game unit. I can't miss my daily exercise which will maintain my physical state. If my body becomes sick then that will also affect the game.'

It wasn't just the physical parts. People who shut themselves up at home like Hyun-woo was bound to become lazy. A lazy gamer would just become a nuisance in the game. That's why Hyun-woo took every opportunity to jog and practice taekwondo so that he could loosen his body. After around 1 hour and a half, Hyun-woo finished training and turned on the computer after returning home. He couldn't resist wondering how the auction had progressed.

"Eh? Was I wrong?"

Hyun-woo stared at the screen with a confused expression for a while.

-This is really a jackpot!

-I never imagined that the 'Slide' skill could be used like that.

-When I saw the video last time, I was wondering how such movements could be made. But it was the option skill of the shoes. Amazing. Amazing. Amazing!

-It's worth it just to wear the shoes of the famous Black Wolf.

-I'm taking it. Anyone else should leave.

-Hah, why should we do that? Don't I have money as well?

-By the way, if that person put these shoes on sale doesn't that mean he found better ones? I'm so envious. If only I could get my hands on such shoes.....

Over the past four days, he only had 20 hits on his Wind Spirit's Boots. There were only 7 auction participants. Now after only 1 hour and a half, the auction enquiries had reached 1300 people. And the auction participants had increased to 84 people. There were also 400 comments attached to the auction. No matter how much he rolled the mouse wheel, it never seemed to end. Just like that, the auction site blew up.....

"Heok, 13 million won? It increase by 6.8 million won after 1 and a half hours.

Hyun-woo's mouth dropped. The advertising strategy to showcase his equipment was a great success. Thanks to the fame of Black Wolf, there was an explosion of interest in the Wind Spirit's Boots.

"There is still 3 days left in the auction period. At this rate....."

He couldn't imagine how much the price would climb. Of course, no matter how greedy he was the amount of money that could be invested in one item was limited. Although interest had been amplified in the item, Hyun-woo guessed that he would receive no more than 15 million won for it. And Hyun-woo wasn't simply surprised that the price had gone up. Although some people were interested in the performance of the shoes, others were simple interested because the famous Black Wolf had worn them. Of course, Hyun-woo realized that the Black Wolf was famous. But he never expected that the price would go so high just because Black Wolf had worn them.

"Anyway, my idea is still effective."

Hyun-woo's eyes emitted a dazzling light as he looked at the selling price. The strategy to use the video to sell items was a success! Thanks to his brilliant sales strategy, it had become a big hit. If such advertisement was added to the items sold from now on then it would be possible to increase the highest bid. Thanks to this, Hyun-woo now came up with a new advertising strategy.

‘If I sell an item then I can receive a fair price!’

Hyun-woo looked at the game unit with an excited expression. Just as he was about to enter, he heard his mother’s voice from outside.

“Hyun-woo, someone is on the phone for you.”

‘Huh? Phone? Who is it this early?’

When Hyun-woo extended his hand, his mother handed him the telephone with a worried look.

“He said it was the police.”

“Police?”

When he listened to the telephone, a clear voice could be heard.

“It’s me.”

“Huh? Who? Wait..... Eh? Is this Teacher-nim?”

“Are you okay?”

Lee Myung-ryong asked with a smirk. Hyun-woo rubbed at his aching joints and sore feet.

“Do I look okay?”

“Huhuhu, I told you. You shouldn’t neglect your normal training.”

“But I didn’t neglect it? I’ve been exercising until today.”

“Well it seems to me that you have been neglecting it. You need to devote yourself.”

“You say that after you beat me so thoroughly.”

Hyun-woo complained as he stared at Lee Myung-ryong. After Hyun-woo and Lee Myung-ryong finishes sparring at the gym, they had arrived at a nearby cafe. In reality, it was more being attacked than a spar. Although it had been so long since he had met Lee Myung-ryong, he had mercilessly beat up Hyun-woo. But even though he complained, the feeling wasn't that bad. No, it actually felt refreshing. After sparring with Lee Myung-ryong, it felt like all his muscles had loosened. In addition, it was enjoyable to meet up with Lee Myung-ryong after such a long time. Anyway, Lee Myung-ryong made an apologetic gesture asked Hyun-woo.

"Has anything happened in the meantime?"

"Yes, I....."

"I got your text. A new house. Sorry I couldn't make it."

It had been almost three months since Hyun-woo met up with Lee Myung-ryong. Although he hadn't been to the gym since, they had met once outside. When he moved house, Lee Myung-ryong had sent a congratulatory message.

"It's okay. But has something happened? Have you finished being busy?"

"I've got some urgent business with you."

"With me?"

"Where do I start explaining....."

Lee Myung-ryong used ambiguous language and scratched his head. After a moment, Lee Myung-ryong began to talk with an embarrassed expression.

"In fact..... A few months ago, I also started playing New World."

"New world? Teacher-nim? Really?"

When Hyun-woo's eyes opened, Lee Myung-ryong coughed and muttered an excuse.

"Ah, it's not like that. I didn't start it for a hobby but because of an investigation."

"An investigation?"

Lee Myung-ryong sighed at Hyun-woo's question and explained the situation. Through various circumstances, he was assigned to the Special Crimes Countermeasures division and reluctantly started New World. Currently he had managed to infiltrate the criminal organization and was investigating. Of course, the reason why he didn't explain why he was assigned to the division was because it related to Hyun-woo. But he was lucky. Since a lot of time had passed since the incident, Hyun-woo had no doubts about why Lee Myung-ryong started playing New World.

"I never imagined that there are wanted criminals in the game."

"I also didn't think about it until after I received the mission."

"So why didn't you tell me that you were starting New World?"

".....It is because I needed to look for the criminal organization and infiltrate it. It was vital that I maintained secrecy."

This was true. The police agency was chasing criminals inside New World. If that information leaked out then the criminals would become wary and information collection would become difficult. But the real reason was that Lee Myung-ryong didn't want Hyun-woo to know the reason why he was demoted. In addition, the captain of the 1st SWAT team was embarrassed by his actions when he first entered New World.

"I understand."

Hyun-woo nodded then looked doubtful.

"But then why are you telling me this now?"

"Like I said, I need something from you. Aren't you playing the game with a dwarf merchant that looks like a pig?"

"A pig like dwarf merchant? Are you talking about Buksil?"

"Buksil? Is his name Buksil?"

"Yes. The pig that is accompanying me is called Buksil."

"Do you know his contact details?"

"Eh? That reminds me, I still don't know his contact details."

Hyun-woo mumbled with a puzzled expression. Buksil had already been accompanying him for several months. But it was also possible to talk to him in New World so he never felt a need to exchange phone numbers.

"There is there a way to contact him?"

"Yes. I'm always travelling with him. Although there was a problem yesterday so we separated for a bit."

While Ark had been trying to escape Bread and Redian, Buksil couldn't grasp the situation and the dolphins took him away to an unknown place. While Ark had commanded the dolphins to take them to Bristania, Ark was unsure of the exact location.

"Separated?"

"If I contact him though mail then we can instantly meet up again. But why do you want Buksil.....? Don't tell me Buksil is a wanted criminal?"

"No, that's not it."

Lee Myung-ryong shook his head and explained.

"The story is a bit long to explain but not so long ago, I managed to infiltrate the criminal organization. But those guys are very distrustful so I haven't found that much information yet. Not so long ago, they were doing something suspicious in Seutandal and that scene was recorded by Buksil."

"A suspicious scene was filmed?"

"There's no doubt but I still don't know what was filmed. Anyway, those guys are running around wildly so I feel like some important information was taken."

"So those guys are after Buksil?"

Then a thought came to Hyun-woo's head.

"Wait? Those guys were after Buksil..... Perhaps the men following from Seutandal.....?"

"Yes, they are the wanted criminals. The police guarantee that they have committed terrible acts."

Hyun-woo lost his energy at Lee Myung-ryong's answer. If they were from the criminal organization Lee Myung-ryong was investigating..... Somehow, he thought it was strange that Jepeteu was looking for Buksil instead of Ark. But he had such a background.... So the video Buksil took could be used as evidence for the police investigation? Then Lee Myung-ryong asked with a watchful look.

"Did you hear anything about it from Buksil?"

"No, Buksil didn't know why they were chasing him."

"..... Well, it was taken with the magic projector so he might not know what was filmed. It is imperative that I check it as soon as possible. Anyway, you're definitely going to meet with that guy?"

"Yes, I'll send a text as soon as I might him. It shouldn't take longer than a few days."

In fact, Hyun-woo had a bigger reason to find Buksil. His items were within Buksil's bags and he also needed to shoot the videos. Of course, there was a contract so Buksil couldn't sell any of the items without Ark's permission. After Hyun-woo answered confidently, Lee Myung-ryong's face relaxed. However, he still couldn't be relieved.

"It is good that you can get in contact with Buksil. But I still can't rest assured."

"Huh?"

"Even if Buksil didn't film anything important, the criminals would do anything to get rid of it. Although the attack on the ferry failed, those fellows have already been smuggled into Bristania. Because you took the boat towards Bristania."

".....That's right."

"Then where are you right now?"

"There were various circumstances so I didn't arrive at the Bristania harbour. I'm somewhere on the south east coast of Bristania but I haven't found a village yet so I don't know my exact location. Buksil doesn't seem to be too far from where I am....."

"That is good."

Lee Myung-ryong nodded and said.

"Those guys thought that you would be near Bristania harbour. If you go to the harbour then they will find you. But if you're away from the harbour then you don't need to worry about those guys chasing you for a while. Meanwhile, please contact Buksil as soon as possible and receive the video from him. I'll use some excuses to lure them to other areas. If we stay in contact then those guys should never be able to find you."

"I understand. Then....."

Hyun-woo looked slightly concerned at the end of those words. It was work associated with wanted criminals. Although they couldn't kill anyone in the game, those guys had committed crimes in reality. However, Lee Myung-ryong was the captain of the number 1 SWAT team so it was natural to cooperate in the investigation. But if something went wrong.....

‘It doesn’t matter if I’m along.’

However, now Hyun-woo was living with his mother. If there was a problem then Hyun-woo’s mother might be affected by it. Hyun-woo’s thoughts were then interrupted.

“Don’t worry, as soon as I receive the video evidence I’ll make sure to deflect their attention away from you and Buksil. Furthermore, they are wanted criminals so they can’t run around freely. Still, if, if..... If those guys so much as even bruise you..... I will give up the police investigation and stop them.”

Lee Myung-ryong saw through Hyun-woo’s anxiety with one glance. Working for the National Police Agency, he had seen many victims with the same fear of retaliation on their faces that Hyun-woo had.

“Yes.”

Hyun-woo nodded without asking any further questions. He didn’t believe in the police’s words. However, it was possible to believe Lee Myung-ryong. After seeing Hyun-woo smile, Lee Myung-ryong nodded and got up.

“Then I have to go now. Because I have to meet those guys at 9 o’clock and search around the harbour. Ah, what is your ID by the way?

I forgot to ask when we met on the boat.....”

“Huh? We’ve met before?”

‘.....Whoops!’

Lee Myung-ryong was surprised and closed his mouth. But it had already been leaked.

“I’ve only taken the boat two times so if we met on there..... That’s right, the guy I met on the ferry who was with the one who kicked me..... Ah, then you’re that merchant I met on the deck?”

“..... That’s me.”

Lee Myung-ryong grinned awkwardly and scratched his head. Then Hyun-woo scanned Lee Myung-ryong up and down and muttered.

"The spar today was somewhat different..... Perhaps?"

"Perhaps? W-what are you saying?"

"Is the spar today your form of revenge for that time?"

Hyun-woo realized it as soon as he heard Lee Myung-ryong was the merchant. At the time, the merchant had attacked Hyun-woo and died from his welcome company. In addition, most of the criminals on the pirate ship attacking the ferry died thanks to Hyun-woo. It was natural to get revenge through a spar. Lee Myung-ryong retorted impudently once his scheme was revealed.

"Revenge? Didn't you kill me first?"

"That's because Teacher-nim unnecessarily hid your identity. Moreover, I wasn't the one who killed you. Wasn't it the Baran clan who killed you?"

Lee Myung-ryong scratched his head and said roughly.

"Do you want to eat parfait?"

"I want to eat the special A set."

".....That's mean. The monthly salary for the police is not that much."

"I'm deeply hurt by Teacher-nim's distrust in me."

So the grudge between teacher and student was settled with one special set meal. They exited the cafe and it was like an information window appeared when Hyun-woo separated from Lee Myung-ryong.

-Secure the video showing the secret of the criminal organization.

<Reward: 3 servings of the parfait special set>

Act 9: Magic Kingdom Bristania

-The step 3 maturation process is in progress.

This is the final step in creating the Necromancer's Immortality Pill. The only thing left is to let it mature long enough to draw out 100% of the effects from each ingredient. Make sure to seal the pot up completely, avoid any direct sunlight and keep it in a cool, dry place.

<Handle with care! There is no guarantee of what will happen if you shake it or it receives an impact.>

=Maturation process, time remaining: 81 hours and 37 minutes.

"Phew, I'm glad there wasn't any problems."

Ark sighed with relief as he confirmed the information window.

'It's useless to be too greedy..... I really thought I was going to save time.'

His plan to take the ferry to save time on creating the immortality pill had backfired. Of course, if the ferry had arrived at the harbour as planned then there would be no problems. However, they received a surprise attack from the pirates along the way. But that wasn't all. Bread had appeared with an unknown grudge. He really felt like he received a huge misfortune whenever he wanted to create an immortality pill. Despite the numerous difficulties, Ark had firmly defended the pot. Throughout the pirate ships attacks, Bread's confrontation and riding the dolphins, he had firmly shaken the pot and passed through stage 1 safely. And he had to stage at a beach on Bristania until the 2nd stage crystallization process finished. After the 2nd stage was finished, the process of maturation immediately began. The time required for the maturation process was 81 hours. So Ark would have to bury the pot under the sand.

'The maturation process is the most important and it needs 81 hours, so I need to bury this pot here for 81 hours. But I don't know what will happen if it is detected by other users or monsters.'

"Master, I found it!"

At that time, Racard came flying from the forest near the beach. Ark had been watching the area and slightly shook the pot when he flinched. At the same time, a warning message flashed before his eyes.

-Shaking the pot during the maturation process is dangerous!

<If the degree of completion falls then the final rating of the immortality pill will decrease>

"What, what the, you? You scared me so the degree of completion went down!"

Ark shouted angrily as sweat dripped down his face. He couldn't know the rating of the finished product until the immortality pill was completed. Since he had to worry about the degree of completion falling throughout all those stressful situations, Ark's nerves were tense. Then Racard acted like a child who had been scolded and said.

"M-me? You're the one shouting for no reason."

"Just be careful. You know how hard it was to gather the ingredients."

".....I understand."

"Have you discovered a village?"

".....Yes, if we travel for around an hour through the forest."

"Well done. You take the lead. It will be a big problem if we encounter a monster now."

Ark gently held the pot with his hand. During the maturation process, there was a worry that the degree of completion would fall if moved too much. So it would be a serious problem if they encountered monsters while travelling to the village. Therefore Ark had Racard switch to satellite mode. Fortunately, the monsters around here weren't that high level so they didn't attack first. But even level 10 wolves were a threat to

Ark now. Racard said 1 hour but he had to go back and forth to avoid the surrounding monsters which took them an extra 30 minutes.

‘I was lucky that I encountered the pirates during the mixing process, f it was the maturation process.....’

Just thinking about it made him afraid. Anyway, a village appeared 1 and a half hours after travelling through the village. The place Racard found was closer to a city than a village.

‘Is this a city in Bristania?’

It was only after discovering a city that Ark felt like he was in a different kingdom. Currently Ark had arrived in the kingdom of Bristania. It was located to the north of Schudenberg Kingdom. Although it was geographically located to the north of Schudenberg, Bristania had a lot of mountains unlike the plains in Schudenberg. In addition, most of it consisted of rough rocks. Well the scenery was nice but he wouldn’t want to live there. Thanks to the barren land, Bristania had naturally developed magic science to live. That was the reason it was called the Magic Kingdom. Of course, most users who started here chose to become a magician instead of a warrior. The magic science made it easy to raise a magician. Anyway, that made the historical background of Bristania much more mystical than other kingdoms. The main buildings possessed a lot of magical aura and the appearance had a geometric design. Most of the town’s shops also dealt with magic tools. Even the weapon stores sold magic spell books and scrolls. The guards at the entrance of the village was also a magician.

“That’s it, now you can return to your castle.”

Once Ark confirmed the village, he sent Racard back to his vampire territory. In a city with low intimacy, occasionally the residents would be hostile to his summons.

‘This is the first time I’m visiting a foreign country so I have to be careful.’

Ark entered the city holding the pot.

“Swalla swalla, swalla swalla!”

Suddenly he heard words that were impossible to understand.

‘What does that mean?’

Ark turned his head at the sound. The voice was coming from the entrance of the city, where a stone gargoyle was giving off a strange light. That place was normally the quartermaster in Schudenberg kingdom. In Bristania, the gargoyle probably played the logistical role. In any case, the voice was coming from users gathered around the gargoyle. It was one user. Ark stared at the user with a confused expression.

“Swalla swalla, swalla swalla, swalla swalla?”

“Swalla swalla, swalla swalla!”

It wasn’t just one user. All of them made strange sounds.

“What are they saying? Swalla swalla? Is that a popular saying?”

But he had no time to care about that right now. Ark approached one of the guards at the entrance and asked.

“Excuse me. What is this city’s name?”

“Swalla swalla? Swalla swalla?”

Then the guards were also speaking an alien language like the users?

‘What the? Isn’t it strange that a NPC is talking like this? What is going on?’

Ark didn’t know how to deal with it and hesitated. The guard tilted his head and seemed to understand something, then pointed inside the city. The place the guard was indicated was the Magic Institute at the city centre.

‘What the? He’s telling me to go there?’

When Ark gestured to the Magic Institute, the guard nodded. Ark scratched his head and headed to the Magic Institute tower. The city was closely filled with geometric shape. While Schudenberg kingdom felt like a medieval city, this truly felt like a fantasy world. The buildings were strange and there were various light and magic effects from the magicians living there. However, even the odd letters on the sign were distorted and he couldn't read them. In addition, the NPCs wandering the city also talked in the strange language.

'Is this a curse? Maybe I'm stuck in a curse. Or are the people stuck?'

Ark walked around the city with a confused look. Then Ark bumped into a boy who ran out from an alley. Ark had been walking timidly while holding the pot so he quickly retreated.

'Huk, what, what the? Pot, my pot!'

Ark quickly checked his pot. Luckily, the physique of the boy was like a dwarf so the impact was too small.

'Phew, that was lucky. Who is he?'

Ark felt like he lost 10 years of his life and glared at the boy. But Ark swallowed his curses as he saw the appearance of the boy.

"Swalla swalla, swalla swalla!"

The boy lowered his head and clamoured in a somewhat upset voice. He couldn't understand but the boy seemed to be apologizing. The problem was the boy didn't look normal. Unlike the dressed up people around him, the boy was wearing tattered clothes. And the clothes revealed that the body was undersized. The boy bowed his head and hurriedly picked up the items that had fallen to the ground. It was some cheap scrolls.

'Is that smell coming from the boy?'

Ark blushed with an embarrassed expression after seeing the boy's appearance. The boy had made the mistake by running out suddenly. However, he felt guilty after determining that the boy had a difficult life.

“Are you okay?”

Ark became embarrassed and helped picked up the items before speaking. The boy looked up with a startled expression and held out a tattered book with shining eyes.

“Swalla swalla? “Swalla swalla! Swalla swalla!”

‘What the? What does that mean?’

Ark couldn’t understand the words and tilted his head to one side. After watching for a bit, Ark guessed what the boy was trying to say.

‘Is he asking me to buy this book?’

Ark looked at the book the boy was holding in his hand. It was a tattered book with an unknown use.

‘Well, I feel slightly sorry so maybe I should buy it?’

Ark seeing the hard life the boy was living, he asked for the price of the book. Then the boy smiled and showed both hands twice.

‘20? Then 20 silver? If it is that much.....’

Although normally Ark wouldn’t even waste 1 copper, he was willing to spend that much for a child. Hadn’t Ark also been an underprivileged boy?

‘It is clear the book is useless.....’

Ark smiled and drew out 20 silver. Then the boy made a disapproving expression and shook his head.

‘Then it was 20 copper not 20 silver? It is slightly strange that such a tattered book would be worth 20 silver.’

Ark thought he misunderstood the price and extended 20 copper. The boy sighed and was that a gold coin he pulled from his pocket?

‘What the? Gold? Huck, he’s saying it is 20 gold?’

Ark looked at the boy with astonishment. A tattered book for 20 gold? Wasn’t it shameful? No matter how much sympathy Ark felt for the boy, he couldn’t buy an unknown book for 20 gold.

‘No, does this boy knows that I feel sorry for him? That book for 20 gold? Is this a joke? Then he tried to look pitiful so that he can swindle me?’

“I don’t need this!”

Ark raised his voice angrily and shook his head. Then the boy’s shoulders dropped as his face lost its brightness. With a lowered head, he disappeared into the alley.

“Sheesh, what the? That was too unreasonable.”

Although he felt uncomfortable for some reason, Ark just shook his head.

“No, that guy must’ve prepared that appearance. He thought to use my kindness to sell that book for 20 gold. I should head to the Magic Institute.”

Ark pushed down his uncomfortable feeling and entered the Magic Institute tower. Then someone from the Magic Institute approached and smiled.

“Swalla swalla! Swalla swalla?”

As expected, it was impossible to understand.

“That.....you see.....”

When Ark stuttered, the magician instantly laughed and said.

“Ah, you must be an adventurer from the Schudenberg kingdom!”

“Eh? You can talk?”

“Of course. How ridiculous would it be if I couldn’t use a language spell?”

“But just before.....”

The magician seemed to know the approximate situation as he laughed and said.

“Hahaha, this must be your first time travelling abroad.”

“That’s right.....”

“Foreigners who travel abroad for the first time often become confused. Because there was no opportunity to hear a foreign language at home.”

“Foreign language?”

“Yes, the words I spoke just then is in the language of Bristania.”

Ark looked doubtful at the magician’s words. Of course this was the first time Ark had travelled to another kingdom. However, he often met NPCs and users from Bristania in Silvana and Schudenberg. At that time he had no problem communicating.

“But I met people from Bristania in Schudenberg and understood them.....”

“They obviously learned the Schudenberg language when travelling from Bristania to Schudenberg.”

The magician smiled and explained. Each of the three kingdoms in the continent had an original language. So before travelling to another kingdom, they needed to acquire the relevant foreign language first. Users and NPCs who came to Schudenberg kingdom had either learnt the language or had been forwarded to an interpreter. However, Ark had failed to learn the language so all he heard was unintelligible language. In fact, that system wasn’t only found in New World. For example, in old games such as WOW or Aion, different tribes were unable to understand each other. Only New World had the system to

learn other languages. Incidentally, a lot of foreigners also connected to New World. The reason users didn't feel inconvenience in communicating was because all languages were translated depending on what area they came from. In other words, it didn't matter if they were Japanese or American as all languages were filtered.

"And foreigners don't know the letters. Since there is no inconvenience communicating in Schudenberg, they never felt the need to learn a foreign language. I don't know how, but sometimes they may inadvertently learn a language. In particular, merchants are fluent in all three languages even if they hadn't learned it."

'Oh, that reminds me, could it be.....'

Ark remembered seeing a 'language' tab on his character information window and he opened it.

-Language Information Window
*Country
[Schudenberg]: 100% understanding.
*Species
[Beast clan] 100% understanding
[Elf] 100% understanding
[Dwarf] 100% understanding
[Hobbit] 100% understanding
[Orc]: 100% understanding
*Other
[Ancient language]: 100% understanding
[Soul] 100% understanding
[Demonic] 100% understanding

- * The Country language is applied to all NPCs in the relevant area.
- *Communication with all NPCs of the relevant element has 100% understanding applied. Also, mental communication has nothing to do with language.
- *The understanding of the relevant monster language is related to the country (special monster languages can be learned separately).
- * The language is automatically acquired when entering the relevant area.

‘Ah, this information window displays the languages I can understand.’

Originally this system was automatically applied when encountering NPCs at the border checkpoint or through the harbour. However, it wasn’t possible to learn such knowledge because he took the dolphins.

“But I didn’t have any trouble in Seutandal.....”

“I heard that too. Seutandal uses the Schudenberg language. That’s because it is geographically closer to Schudenberg than other kingdoms.”

“So what should I do?”

“Don’t worry. We are selling dictionaries with the language of each country.”

The magician showed him a stack of books with a friendly smile. Ark’s mouth opened absent-mindedly as he was guided to the stacks. There were a huge amount of books sorted onto the stacks. It was hundreds of copies of the foreign language dictionaries. Dictionaries of the three kingdoms as well as ancient languages..... They even had dictionaries of the language of each monster race. The magician took out a book wrapped in a blue light.

“There are many types of Bristania language dictionaries but this is the best one. This is a dictionary the Magic Institute created using mental magic. Once this dictionary is used, the mental magic will act and it will

be like you have learnt the Bristania language for dozens of years. Isn't that wonderful?"

It was but the price was also amazing. He didn't know what type of magic was used but one copy cost 120 gold. Of course, in reality it cost 1,200,000 won to master a foreign language through a school. However, now he had to spend 120 gold to learn a foreign language that would have no use in Schudenberg? Ark inwardly complained and asked.

"Is there a dictionary that is a bit cheaper?"

"Cheaper?"

The magician who was like an eager salesman made a grumpy face. Then he looked through the book stacks and pulled out an old book.

"How about this dictionary? It is a beginner's course so it will take some time to master the Bristania language. Well, if you study hard then communication won't be a big problem."

The magician said without any sincerity but Ark let out a huge sigh of relief. It was a common dictionary which cost 20 gold. He honestly thought that 20 gold was also a waste. But if he was going to be in Bristania then he had to learn the language. If he couldn't communicate with NPCs then he couldn't play the game properly.

"I'll take this one."

"That will be 20 gold."

"Please give a discount."

"Huh?"

The magician made an absurd face at Ark's words. However, he jumped with surprise when Ark took out the Magic Institute member certificate.

"This is a Magic Institute member certification? In addition, your name is Ark? Then you are Ark-nim?"

“Huh? You know me?”

“Of course. There isn’t anyone in the Magic Institute who doesn’t know who Ark-nim is. Thanks to the research that Ark-nim brought back, the Magic Institute has launched a series of new products.”

“New products?”

“Eh? You don’t know? You haven’t heard the uproar these days?”

The magician murmured and pointed to a flyer stuck to the wall.

-The Magic Institute’s New Products Guide

<Weapon Reinforcing Agent>

Have you become dejected because your weapon has weakened? Are you unable to unleash your capabilities because you don’t have a good weapon? There is no need to worry anymore. After a long research, the Magic Institute has launched an ambitious magic while can make your weapon stronger using a special Weapon Reinforcing Agent.

* Please contact the staff if there are questions about price and performance.

<Letter Movement Service>

Is walking a far distance difficult? Although your body is sick, do you want to visit a distant friend? Do you want to go somewhere else but can’t deal with the monsters? There is no need to worry anymore. Using the commercialized Letter Movement, you can move between the magic towers.

*Still only limited to some metropolitan areas.

After completing the quests related to Magaro, Shannen had used Magaro’s research to develop these products. The areas the Magic Institute had concentrated on in Magaro’s research was the <Weapon Reinforcement Agent> and the <Letter Movement>. In addition, it was filled with new information. However, Ark shook his head after he

asked for the price. The cheapest price to use the <Letter Movement> was 50 gold. Meanwhile, the <Weapon Reinforcement Agent> cost more than 100 gold depending on the type and efficiency of the weapon. Since merchants used the <Letter Movement> a lot, it still made a profit but most people preferred to leave reinforcement to an expert blacksmith.

“Aaaaaack!”

While Ark was thinking that, a light appeared on the highest level of the tower and a user appeared on the floor.

“Kuak, swalla swalla, swalla swalla, swalla swalla....eeeeek!”

The user cursed with a pale face and vomited. Although Ark couldn't understand the words, he had used Letter Movement before and could understand the circumstances. Letter Movement really did cause an awful feeling. The user was probably in the same state that Ark had been in. Although Letter Movement had been commercialized, they still couldn't guarantee a comfortable method of travel.

“Well, there is still some margin for improvement.....”

The magician scratched his head with an awkward face.

“Do you have any other business?”

“I'd like to use a personal warehouse and the transfer mailbox.”

“Anything else?”

“Ah, what is the name of this city?”

“Ciel. A city located in the southwest of Bristania.”

“Thank you very much.”

Thanks to his Magic Institute certification, he was able to rent a warehouse in the magic tower for free. Ark entered the personal warehouse and stored the pot carefully. That was the biggest reason Ark

wanted to find a village. Since the degree of completion would fall if the pot shook a little bit, wasn't it better not to carry it around?

"Phew, now I'm relieved."

Ark wrote a letter to Buksil telling him to come to Ciel. Buksil was a merchant so of course he possessed a mobile mailbox. The mobile mailbox was different from the general mailbox and wasn't restrained to one place. Once Buksil arrived at a village in Bristania, he would be able to check the letter at a Magic Institute. However, there were also the wanted criminals within this area. He didn't want the cowardly Buksil to become scared so Ark couldn't let him know about the wanted criminals.

"Now, all my work has finished."

Ark exited the Magic Institute after using the mailbox. When wandering outside, it still wasn't possible to understand the users and NPCs.

"Should I use this now?"

Ark took out the dictionary he purchased from the magician. Just as he was about to use it, he suddenly stopped.

'Eh? Wait? This dictionary.....?'

Ark looked at the dictionary and belatedly realized his mistake. It was the tattered book that the boy in the alley had been selling. After looking at the letters on the book, wasn't it the same dictionary?

'Then the boy was also selling this dictionary?'

In the end, the 20 gold wasn't an absurd price but was actually the market price. So the boy wasn't a swindler.....Ark got an idea and quickly ran back into the Magic Institute.

"Wait a minute. I'm sorry but can't I return the dictionary?"

"Huh? You are a full member of the Magic Institute.....wouldn't not knowing the language be difficult?"

"Please grant my request."

After getting the refund, Ark went running to the alley.

'There he is!'

After searching a few alleys, he managed to find the boy from a short time ago. The boy had set up a stall in an alley and was yelling in unknown words.

"Excuse me....."

The boy flinched when Ark approached and shrunk back. He seemed to think that Ark was visiting with some hostile intentions. Ark scratched his head and muttered with an embarrassed expression.

"No, it's not.....I seemed to have misunderstood you a while ago and came to apologize. Instead of just speaking, I was wondering if I could buy your dictionary?"

"Swalla swalla? Swalla swalla?"

The boy tilted his head to one side. Once again, it was really frustrating not being able to communicate. After holding the 20 gold and pointing to the dictionary, the boy seemed to understand the situation and laughed. Although it was a little different, Ark also remembered a time when he had been wrongfully suspected. When he previously had a part time job at a store, Ark had been suspected of stealing several thousand won. Fortunately, it was revealed that the president had just calculated wrongly and the suspicions had been removed. But he was still hurt by that time.

He felt ashamed that he acted like the president and accused the boy of being a swindler. So he received a 15% refund for the dictionary thanks to the Magic Institute qualification and bought the dictionary from the boy. Luckily, the boy didn't mind that he had been treated as a swindler in Ark's head. Since Ark deliberating sought him out to buy the dictionary, the boy just laughed gratefully and bowed to Ark. He looked pretty cute.

‘Isn’t this guy surprisingly cute?’

Ark smiled and looked at the other things on the stall. Although he had no need for them right then, Ark bought a few useful scrolls. Even though Ark often extorted Sid and Buksil, he mainly did it to his opponents. After remembering his previous situation, Ark could afford to make a small gesture. Was this the first time he thought of another person’s circumstances? But thanks to the rental house being bought and the items on the auction site being sold at a higher than expected price, Ark had a surplus of money to be spent.

‘I have a margin with which to spend some money.’

Ark named a price which was about 10% more than the boy’s offer. The scrolls weren’t that expensive so he could afford a few of them. But the boy shook his head and named the fixed price. Ark was a bit embarrassed but he liked the boy’s honest attitude.

“Swalla swalla, swalla swalla!”

“Well, please live well.”

He stroked the boy’s head who smiled before Ark left the alley. After he only bought the items because he felt bad about the misunderstanding, he felt quite good afterwards.

“Now that the uncomfortable feeling is gone, shall I learn the language?”

Ark used the dictionary and the information window appeared.

-A new language has been learnt using the Bristania language dictionary.

[Bristania] 30% understanding: you have gained knowledge about the Bristania language.

However, you will be unable to understand all the words until your understanding is 100%. The only way to learn a foreign language quickly is to engage in a lot of conversation. Conversing with users or

NPCs from the corresponding country will increase understanding.

Thanks to the language being incorporated, he could understand some noises.

"It's cheap. Swalla swalla, cheap! Various cheap swalla swalla magic swalla swalla."

"New swalla swalla goods received swalla swalla at our store!"

However, it seemed like a tape had been mixed with an alien language.

"My intimacy is low and communication is also inconvenient."

But Ark could determine the main details of what the NPC was saying. As expected, it was a cheap item.

"Still, this is better than the other option."

No matter the inconvenience, he would rather learn the language than waste 120 gold. In addition, at the beginning he couldn't communicate at all but now it was able to approximately understand the words.

"Now I have to wait for the completion of the immortality pill here and for Buksil to get in contact. In the meantime, he should talk to some NPCs and become used to the Bristania language. "What shall I do? The monsters around here are too low levelled....."

Ark murmured as he walked around the town listening to NPCs.

"Listen closely, swalla swalla. You are a traveller with a lot of experience. Swalla swalla. My worries, swalla swalla. Will you accept?"

"Ah, I'm going crazy, swalla swalla, how can it be done, swalla swalla, can somebody help me?"

"Do you maybe, swalla swalla, need a job?"

They were NPCs who all gave quests. When Ark came into the city without learning the language, he was unable to trigger quests. Before

coming into the city, he checked that the monsters were around level 150-200. So the city had a lot of level 100-150 users. It was comparable to the outskirts of Nagaran in Schudenberg kingdom. While the level 366 Ark was wandering around such a place, he heard a variety of quests. Since this was the first time he came to Bristania, the quests came flowing from all directions. However Ark rejected all the quests. Since he was level 366, if he did any quests below level 200 then he wouldn't receive any experience. Of course, sometimes quests were given in low level villages. But the quests they gave was mainly moving baggage. There was also the repetitive quests of hunting monsters. Therefore none of the NPCs running up to him gave plausible quests.

'But I have to stay here for 3 days so I can't do nothing. I'll go outside and gather ingredients while checking if there are any monsters that will give experience.'

Ark was just thinking about leaving the city. Then a shabby building near the shopping centre caught his eye. The reason Ark was interested in the building was because of the sign 'Martial Arts Training Centre.'

'Martial arts training? Then martial arts is taught there?'

This was the first time Ark had seen a martial arts dojo here so he turned around and walked there. In Schudenberg, there was a place where hired mercenaries could learn warrior skills. But it wasn't like this place which had a sign saying the training ground. In addition, this was the magic kingdom so it was a place more interested in magic than Sword Mastery.

"Welcome!"

A hobbit ran and greeted him when Ark entered.

"Is this a place where martial arts is taught?"

"That's right. Swalla swalla, everyone here, swalla swalla, can become a great warrior, swalla swalla. And not just warriors, swalla swalla, even magicians can train."

“Magicians? What kind of techniques are you teaching?”

“Huhuhu, swalla swalla, you’d be surprised when you see it. Swalla swalla.”

The hobbit smiles with satisfaction. When he entered an auditorium, a statue of a big, burly hobbit could be seen.

“This is the founder of our dojo, Ramja. Swalla swalla, I’m his descendant, swalla swalla, we train in the methods of our founder, swalla swalla, in order to do that, swalla swalla, we have start of the art equipment.”

The hobbit indicated to a wooden doll in the training area and said.

“This wooden doll, swalla swalla, uses magic, swalla swalla, moves automatically, swalla swalla, when practicing against the wooden doll, swalla swalla, your combat ability will rise naturally!”

Ark still couldn’t understand all of the language so it was difficult to understand the words. Although the language understanding was low, he was able to interpret the general principles of the training method against the wooden doll. When the wooden training doll was turned on, it would move and start a battle against the player. Players would score points if they avoided the doll’s offensive and managed to attack it. The player was considered to have mastered the relevant training if they got over 300 points in the time limit. When mastering the training, a bonus of +1 points will be applied to stats and the player will be qualified for the next stage. The wooden doll had 10 stages of difficulty. However, if a mastered stage was challenged again then the bonus wouldn’t be applied.

‘Stats can be increased for free?’

Ark felt refreshed as he grasped almost all of the training system. The wooden doll had a total of 10 stages of difficult! If he mastered all stages then wouldn’t he get 10 extra stats? 10 extra stats was like gaining 1 level. Currently Ark was level 366. At this level, rising one level within 7~15 hours wasn’t a small amount.

‘Then all warriors who start in Bristania receives this bonus? Okay, I can’t miss this opportunity to gain stats. I have to break through the 10 stages quickly!’

“How do I use this?”

“Here, swalla swalla, put a coin in, swalla swalla.”

The hobbit pointed to a coin slot near the wooden doll. The training wasn’t free!

“People who challenge the wooden doll, swalla swalla, invest 100 gold, swalla swalla.”

Ark then realized the training dojo wasn’t as superficial as he thought. With a price of 10 silver for one stat, that was like the value of a gum. However, if the stage failed than 10 more silver was required. So if someone failed 10 times that would be 10 gold and 100 times was 100 gold wasted. With the degree of difficulty, it would be easy for people to lose 100 gold to the hobbit.

‘But.....’

Ark had survived so far using martial arts.

‘This is a good opportunity to examine my skills.’

Ark stood before the wooden doll and inserted the coin. Sseon sseon sseon sseon, there was the light sound of music and the wooden doll started to move.

-You have mastered the 9th stage on the wooden doll. Stamina increases by 1.

-You have mastered the 10th stage on the wooden doll. Strength increases by 1.

-You have completely mastered sparring against the wooden doll!

<Training Dojo Mastery bonus: Strength +5, Agility +5, Stamina +5>

Pa pa pa pang~!

After the 10 stages were mastered, a cannon salute instantly appeared from the head of the wooden doll.

“Awesome, swalla swalla!”

When Ark perfectly conquered the wooden doll, the hobbit’s mouth dropped with amazement.

“In such a short time, swalla swalla, the people who cleared, swalla swalla, didn’t, swalla swalla, numerous warriors abandoned the ordeal halfway, swalla swalla, only a few have mastered it, swalla swalla!”

‘Certainly it was more difficulty than I thought.’

While Ark was resting, he stared at the wooden doll. The first 5 stages were so easy that it was slightly regrettable. Just by avoiding the fist of the wooden doll which flew in a straight line and counterattacking, he was easily able to reach 300 points. But the situation completely changed once he reached stage 6. The wooden doll spouted 6 arms and they all attacked at the same time. Since Ark had rushed it, he failed stages 6-8 four times.

‘If I hadn’t practiced against the Mould Zombies then I wouldn’t have been able to master the 10 stages. I learned taekwondo so it would be a lot more difficult for general users.’

A person who wasted 100 gold would understand when to stop. Anyway, he challenged again after failing four times and Ark managed to broke through the 10th stage. He had invested 1 gold and 40 silver, and gained 4 stamina, 3 agility and 3 stamina. In addition, the mastery bonus gave him a +5 to strength, agility and stamina!

‘It only took 30 minutes.’

It was just like picking up stats freely.

'I really can't ignore low level towns. This is Bristania, not Schudenberg. Who knows what else will be different here? I have to carefully check through every village I visit from now on.'

Ark was thinking that when something interrupted him.

"In the end, swalla swalla, you will be the last, swalla swalla, graduate."

"What do you mean?"

Ark asked and the hobbit pointed to the training area with a sneer.

"As you can see. Swalla swalla, in the past we used to get a lot of visitors. Swalla swalla, but now the number of people training, swalla swalla, the customers are few, swalla swalla, and have no guts! As expected, a dojo shouldn't be built in the magic kingdom, swalla swalla, I'm almost bankrupt, swalla swalla."

The hobbit sighed as he looked at the statue.

"Well, it isn't possible anymore, swalla swalla, I haven't found a talented enough successor to the founder's secret technique, swalla swalla, it's really regrettable, swalla swalla, ah that's right, swalla swalla, perhaps you, swalla swalla, would you like to try?"

The hobbit suddenly pointed towards a shape of a palm underneath the hobbit statue. Ark placed his hand on the palm without any thoughts. All of a sudden, there was a mechanical sound and the statue started revolving. The hobbit shouted with an amazed voice.

"Unbelievable, swalla swalla, really, swalla swalla, the seal is melting, swalla swalla!"

"The seal?"

Ark asked the hobbit who was making excited noises.

"In fact, the founder of this dojo, swalla swalla, legend, swalla swalla, master of kung fu martial arts, swalla swalla! If only at that time, swalla swalla! The devil, swalla swalla! That person, swalla swalla, and him,

swalla swalla, sealed the secret technique, swalla swalla only a person with the appropriate qualification and power will be able to learn the sealed secret technique, swalla swalla!”

He was unfamiliar with the language so Ark couldn’t completely understand the excited noises. However, he was able to understand the most important words among the broken speech. Ark cut and pasted the words together to understand the contents. The person whom the statue was based off and who built this dojo was the legendary master of kung fu techniques. It was to the extent that he could even defeat the devil! And he had placed his techniques on a scroll and sealed it here. Only a person with the appropriate qualifications and skills to learn the secret technique could unseal it. Then why could Ark unseal it? The answer was simple. When Ark touched the scroll, an information window instantly appeared.

-Thanks to ‘Pursuit of Truth,’ you have acquired a new lore skill.

<Lore skill learned: Entrusted Volumes>

* 7000 fame is necessary to learn this skill.

‘A hidden secret technique!’

Ark’s eyes widened. Yes, the found of this dojo was a ‘person who conveyed hidden lore.’

“Ohhh, my eyes, swalla swalla. Go ahead and grab the scroll, swalla swalla!”

Just as Ark tried to grab the scroll, sparks occurred and his hand bounced off.

-You don’t have the necessary fame to learn this skill!

‘Huck, it needs 7000 fame?’

Ark stifled a scream as he saw the information window. He had used 6000 fame to learn the Ghost Knight Corps skill in Oberium. But now he

needed 7000? If 7000 fame was needed then how wonderful would the skill be?

‘If he is the legendary master of kung fu then it must be an amazing skill!’

After seeing that he needed 7000 fame for it, Ark desired the skill even more. He could also guess the skill from the name Entrusted Volumes.

‘In RPG games, sometimes a surprisingly large treasure like a heirloom can be found in a beginner’s village. This might be a jackpot!’

However, Ark currently only had 5840 fame. After learning the Ghost Knights Corps skill, he needed a further 1160 fame to learn the skill.

“Ah, swalla swalla, that’s right the founder, swalla swalla, the person who can learn this secret technique, swalla swalla, people who seek the truth, swalla swalla, also needs a suitable amount of fame, swalla swalla.”

The hobbit spoke with a disappointed expression when he couldn’t grab the scroll. Then he grasped Ark’s hand and said.

“Still, swalla swalla, you are the one who unsealed it, swalla swalla, for the first time, swalla swalla, it is probably the gods’ intention, swalla swalla, when you return with the appropriate fame then it will be waiting for you, swalla swalla, please learn the founder’s secret techniques through any means swalla swalla.”

“I understand!”

Ark shook the hobbit’s hand and replied. He had accidentally discovered a secret technique in a place like this. Who would give up because of a lack of fame?

“I will gain fame as quickly as possible and return for the secret technique!”

Ark instantly ran out of the dojo.

‘Now the question is how I should raise my fame.....’

There were many ways to raise fame in New World. There were usually three common methods. It was solving quests, receiving a title or doing some big services for a city. Though in Ark's case, he received a lot of fame from Miracle Nursing.

'But it isn't easy to use Miracle Nursing or receive a title, and this was the first time he visited the village so it wouldn't be easy to render some services for the city.'

The only way let was to complete quests. And this city had a large number of NPCs eager to commission quests. Of course, he wouldn't receive any money or experience but the most important thing now was fame. Ark rushed to the village square where the NPCs were giving quests.

"A short time ago you, swalla swalla, declined?"

"No, I did it because it was my first trip here. I was also unfamiliar with the language so I couldn't understand your difficult situation. But now if you have a difficult situation then please tell me."

"If that's the case, swalla swalla. Can you find my luggage?"

"You said it was a luggage?"

"I originally, swalla swalla. am a carrier, swalla swalla, but while travelling to another village I was attacked by kobolds, swalla swalla, and ran off with my luggage, swalla swalla, kobolds carried the luggage and returned to their hideout, swalla swalla, I need it by tomorrow, swalla swalla, the miscellaneous items with the luggage, swalla swalla, it is dangerous but can you find it?"

When the old man's words finished, a quest information window appeared. Since his understanding of Bristania was 30%, the old man's words were mixed with swalla swalla and he couldn't understand it properly but luckily the quest window showed the proper information

-The old man in Ciel is a porter who has encountered a problem.

The old man has asked you to find the luggage lost to the kobolds. According to the old man, the stolen goods are piled up with a variety of other items. Infiltrate the kobold's hideout and bring back 10 luggages.

<Difficulty level: D>

"I will go straight away!"

Ark accepted the quest and ran outside like the wind.

From Ark.

I have arrived at Ciel. I have some urgent business with you so come as soon as possible when you receive this.

"Che!"

Buksil blew his nose on the letter and threw it away.

"Urgent business? Bossing me around as always."

"Aren't you going?"

Baekgu asked after seeing Buksil's attitude.

Buksil just laughed and replied.

"I'm going. Ark might be bullying me but I also have to go that way. But now right now. Although he says it is urgent business, I finally got away from him for a little bit so I'm going to enjoy this holiday."

Buksil murmured as he looked out the window where there was a festive atmosphere. In fact, Buksil had meant to join Ark immediately when he was first contacted. However, Buksil had found a village called Bosaga two days north from where Ark was in Ciel. And that village was in a festival period.

"I've come to this village during a festival so there is no way I can go running when Ark called.

After so much struggles, finding this village from the coast is like a sign from god."

"But if Ark finds out later....."

"I'll just tell Ark I didn't see the letter."

Buksil laughed and replied after Baekgu muttered in an uneasy voice.

"Huhuhu. After travelling with Ark, I realized how important I am. I'm going to use this chance to make my future travels more comfortable. So just trust me."

"Yes, Master."

"So let's go. The first target is cotton candy. Ohhhhhhh!"

"Ohhhh, this is great!"

Buksil dragged Baekgu to a stall on the opposite side while drooling. At that time, around 30 people entered through the north gate of Bosaga.

"Really?"

"Yes, I searched the internet and accidentally came across the video. The video showed the festivities in Bosaga village and there was a pig like fellow among the residents."

The person speaking was Isyuram. Isyuram knew that Ark was near the southwest coast. So the wanted criminals who had been searching the coast along the harbour split into two groups and moved along the northwest and southwest. If they moved to the southwest then Ark might be caught. The urgent Isyuram suddenly remembered a flyer advertising the festival at the harbour and lured the wanted criminals to Bosaga village. Garam nodded at Isyuram's words and said.

"It is really lucky that you found it. If we find that guy now then Jepeteu hyung will trust you 100%. Now, let's go search."

"Hmm, yes."

Isyuram awkwardly grinned and nodded. Meanwhile, a man and woman entered through the south gate of Bosaga village.

“Oh, really.... I like a bustling place like this but..... Furthermore, we need to find that Ark guy. There is no time to be playing around.”

“Shut up, we have to pretend to enjoy the festival no matter how busy it is. A great amount of people will be coming from the surrounding cities for the Bosaga festival. If he arrived near this coast then he is likely to come here.”

“If you say so.”

“Huhuhu, isn’t it? Right? Then let’s go eat some barbecue.”

“..... As expected, do you really just want to play?”

“It’s legwork, legwork.”

The person approaching the barbecue was a charming female magician wearing white chain armour. Her name was Redian. The man accompanying her and scratching his head was the big, burly Bread. They had pursued Ark all the way to Bristania’s coast and arrived at Bosaga village.

TO BE CONTINUED

[End of Volume 15]